STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 60

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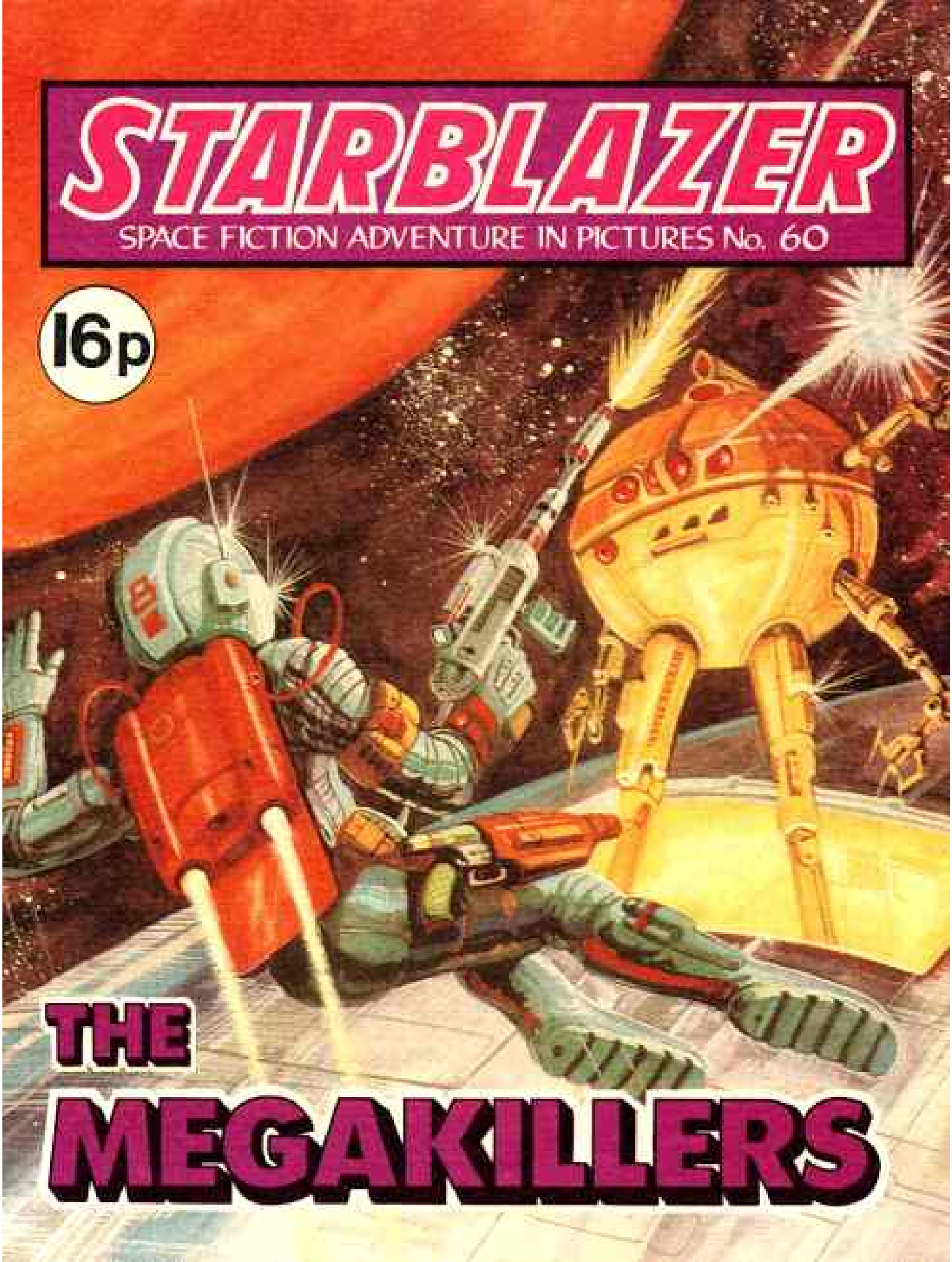
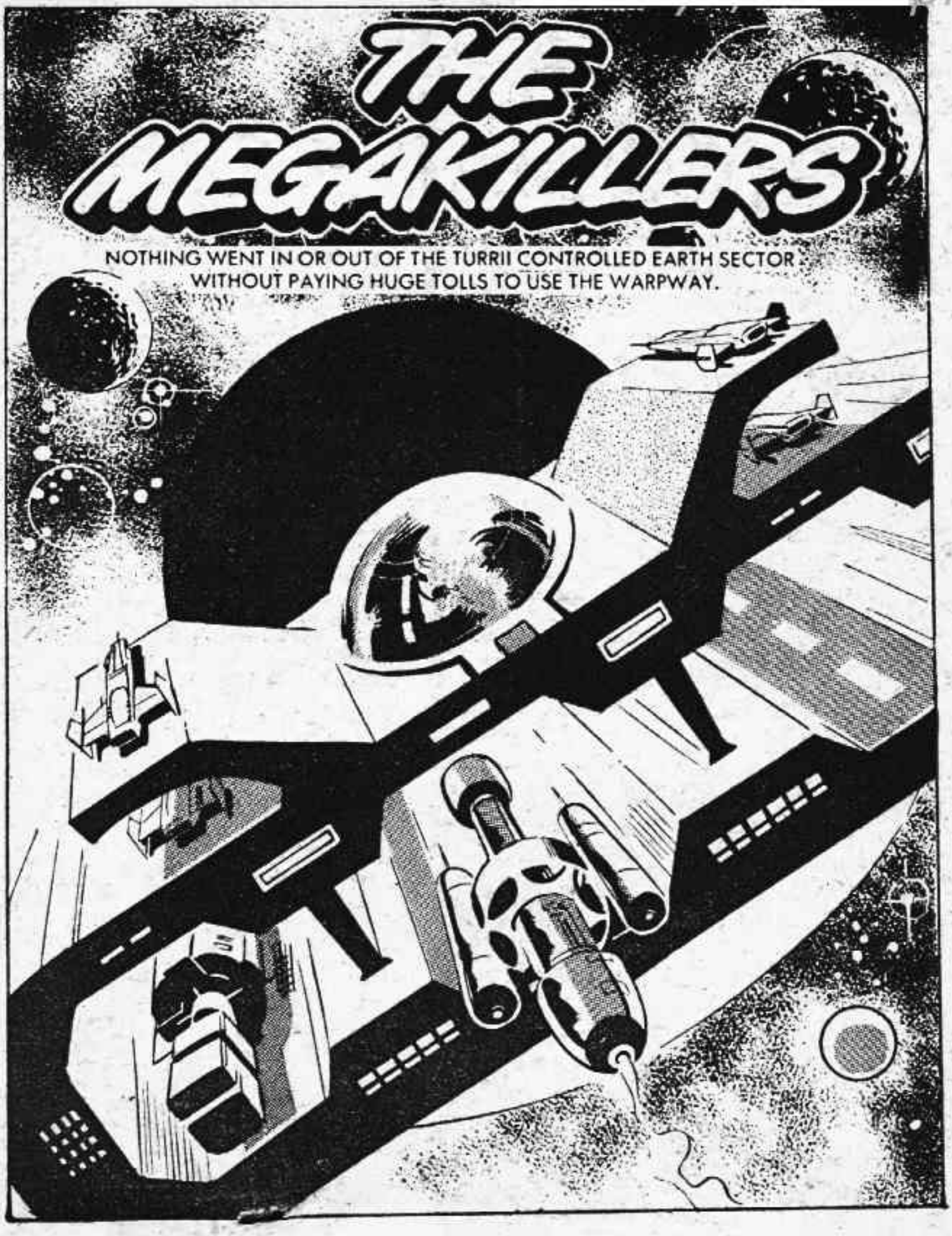
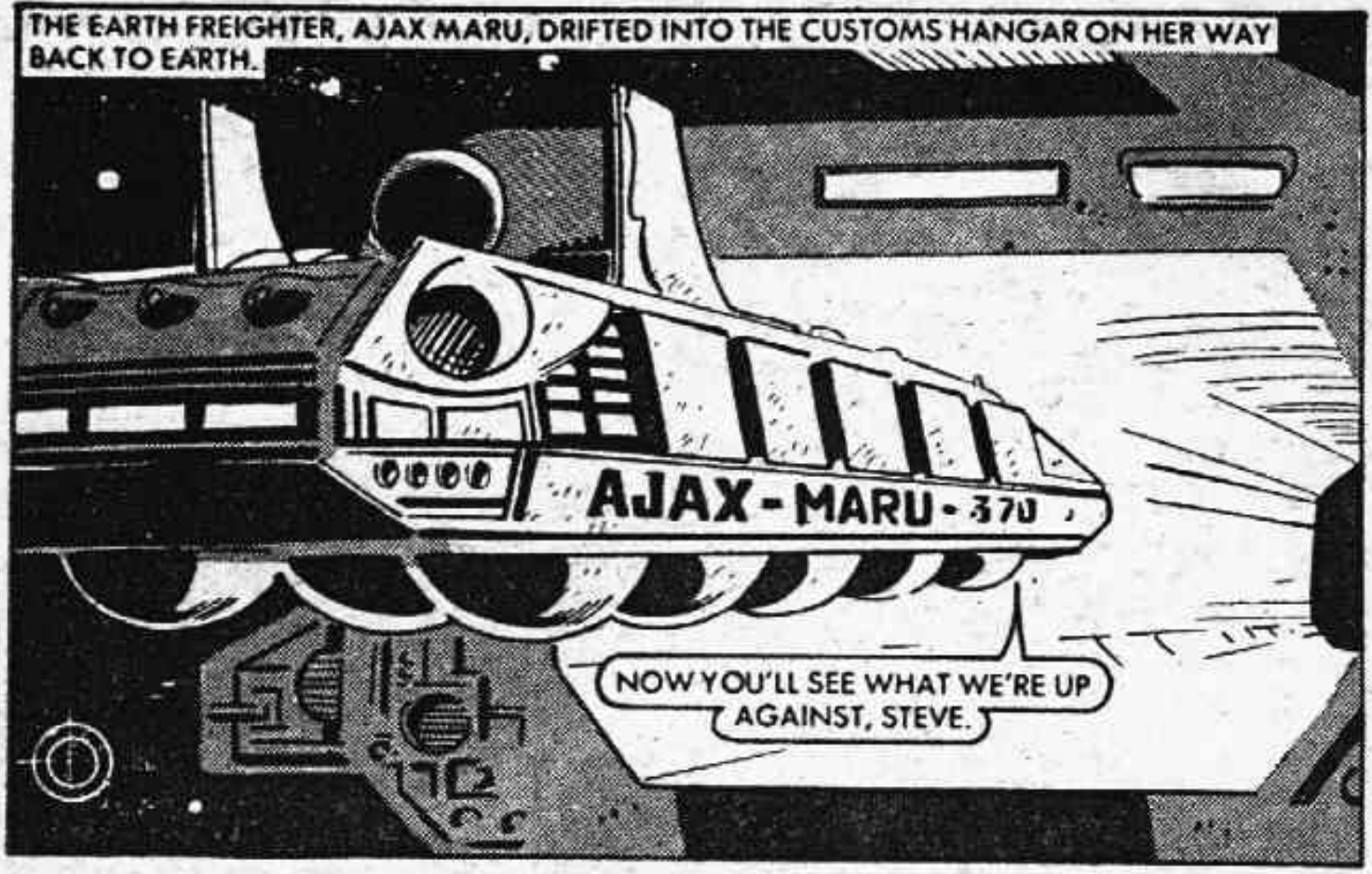


THE MEGAKILLERS

STARBLAZER

DISTANCES BETWEEN STARS WERE IMMENSE. EVEN TRAVELLING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, JOURNEYS STILL TOOK YEARS TO COMPLETE. WITH THE DISCOVERY OF THE WARPWAYS THE PROBLEM WAS SOLVED. WARPWAYS WERE VERY SMALL AREAS OF SPACE WHERE THE COSMIC FORCES WERE IN IMBALANCE CAUSING TIME AND DISTANCE TO COMPRESS. GOING THROUGH A WARPWAY, A JOURNEY OF A HUNDRED LIGHT YEARS TOOK ONLY A DAY. HOWEVER, WARPWAYS WERE FEW IN NUMBER AND THERE WAS ONLY ONE IN THE EARTH SECTOR—AND THE EVIL TURRII CONTROLLED THE OTHER END OF IT.


THE MEGAKILLERS
NOTHING WENT IN OR OUT OF THE TURRII CONTROLLED EARTH SECTOR WITHOUT PAYING HUGE TOLLS TO USE THE WARPWAY.


THE EARTH FREIGHTER, AJAX MARU, DRIFTED INTO THE CUSTOMS HANGAR ON HER WAY BACK TO EARTH.
AJAX - MARU - 370
NOW YOU'LL SEE WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, STEVE.

MAJOR STEVEN STEEL WAS TRAVELLING AS A PASSENGER ON THE FREIGHTER.
EARTH FEDERATION SENT ME ON THIS TRIP TO FIND OUT FOR MYSELF, CAPTAIN. I'VE GOT TO MAKE A REPORT ON EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS.
WELL, GET READY. CUSTOMS HAVE JUST MADE A SCAN OF US.

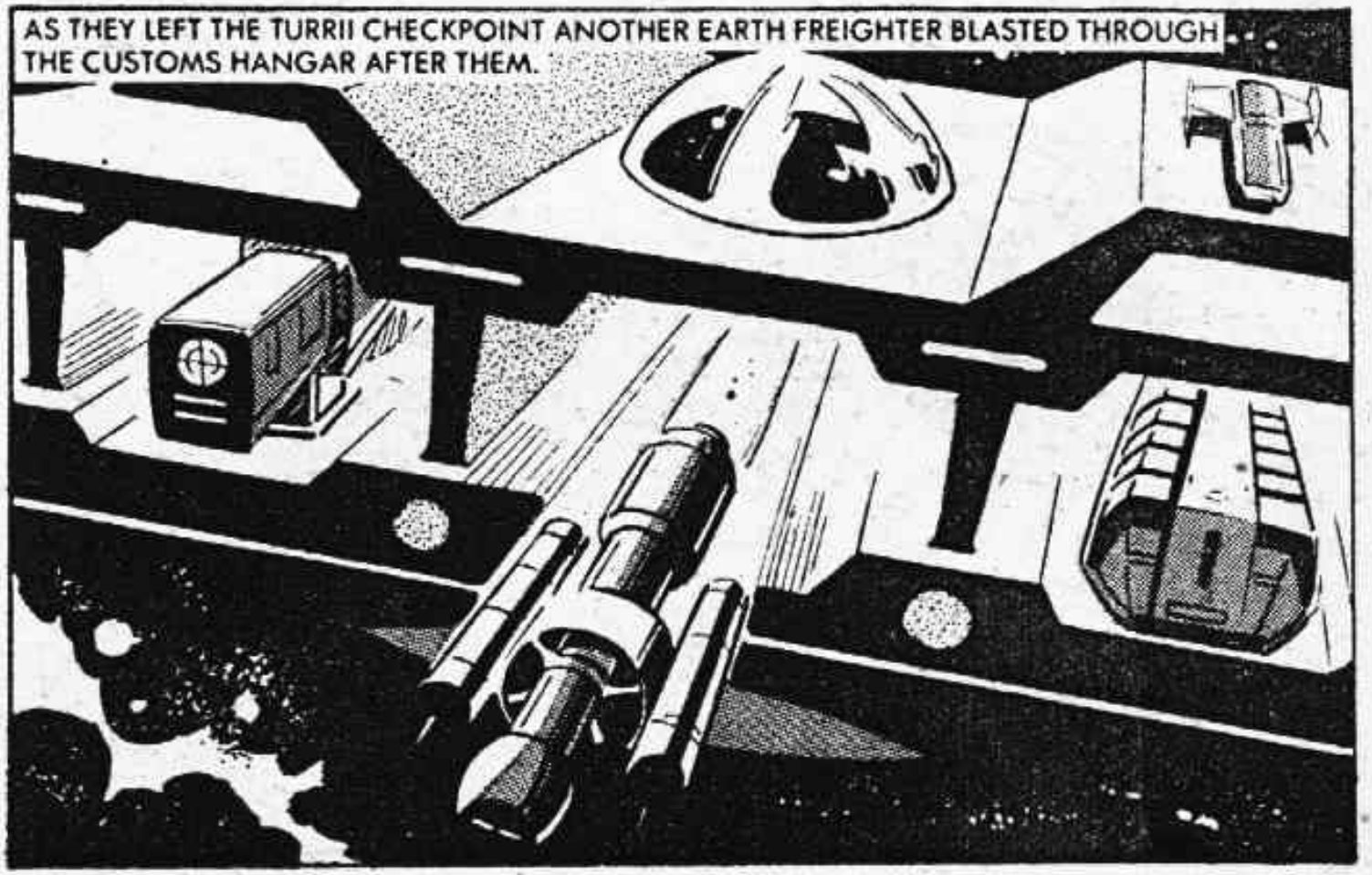
YOU'RE CARRYING GOLANIUM ORE, EARTHMAN.
YES—IT IS EXEMPT FROM DUTY.

IT USED TO BE—NOW YOU HAND OVER 50% OF THE CARGO.
YOU THIEVING VERMIN! I'VE SPENT SIX MONTHS FREIGHTING THAT ACROSS THE GALAXY!

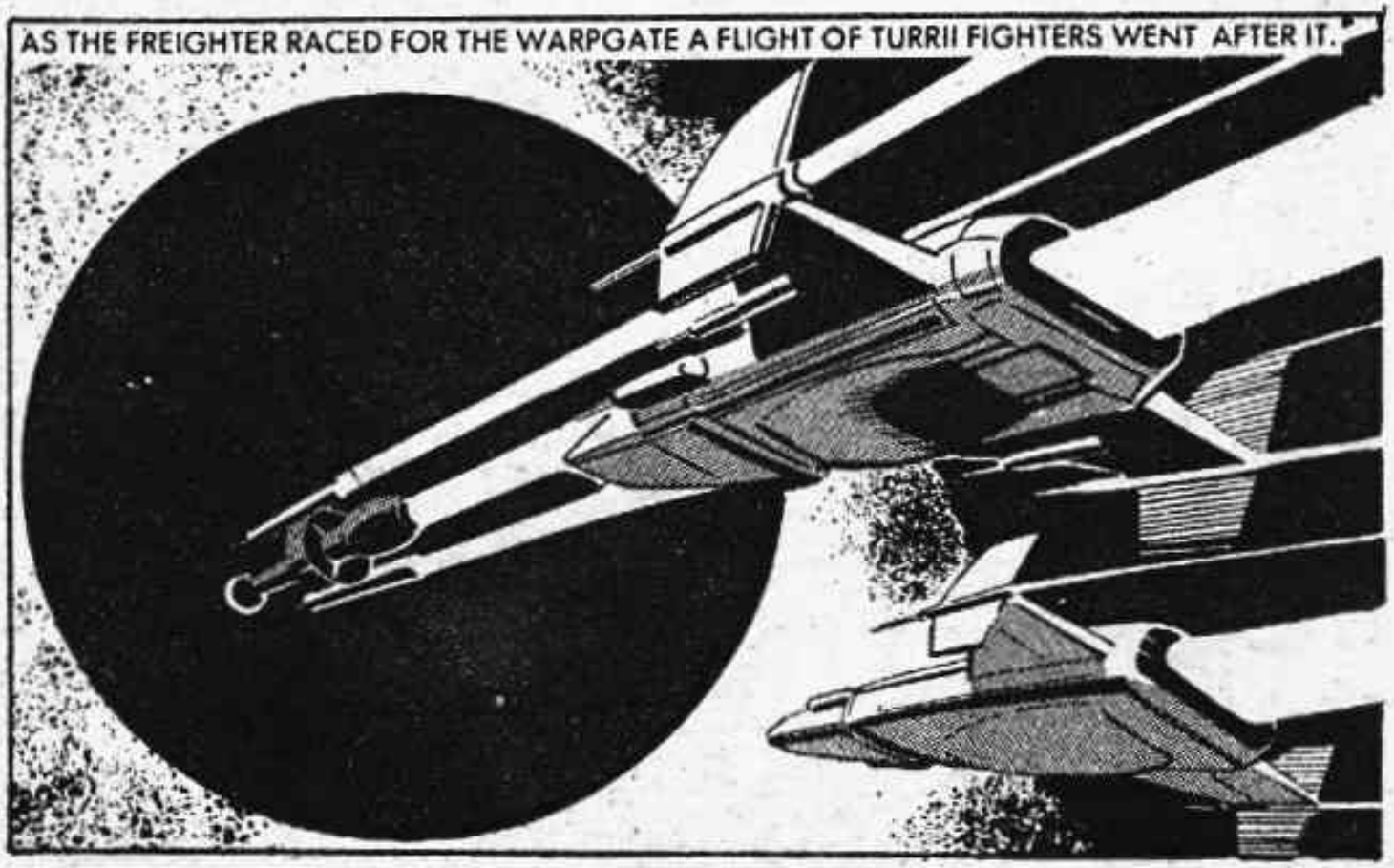
YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE OUR WARPGATE— YOU'RE FREE TO USE OPEN SPACE. IT SHOULD ONLY TAKE YOU TWENTY YEARS TO GET HOME!
ROT YOUR SCALES! TAKE IT THEN!

AN UNLOADING TUBE WAS CLAMPED TO THE FREIGHTER'S HOLDS AND THE CARGO PUMPED OUT.
EASY, CAPTAIN! THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT, THEY'VE GOT LEGAL CONTROL OVER THE WARPGATE.
AJAX-
ARU-370
I KNOW, BUT THEY'RE BLEEDING US DRY.

YOU'RE FREE TO GO THROUGH NOW, EARTHMAN. IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.
GLOATING FOOL.


AS THEY LEFT THE TURRII CHECKPOINT ANOTHER EARTH FREIGHTER BLASTED THROUGH THE CUSTOMS HANGAR AFTER THEM.

THAT IDIOT'S TRYING TO DODGE PAYING THE TOLLS.
HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT IN THAT OLD CRATE!


AS THE FREIGHTER RACED FOR THE WARPGATE A FLIGHT OF TURRII FIGHTERS WENT AFTER IT.

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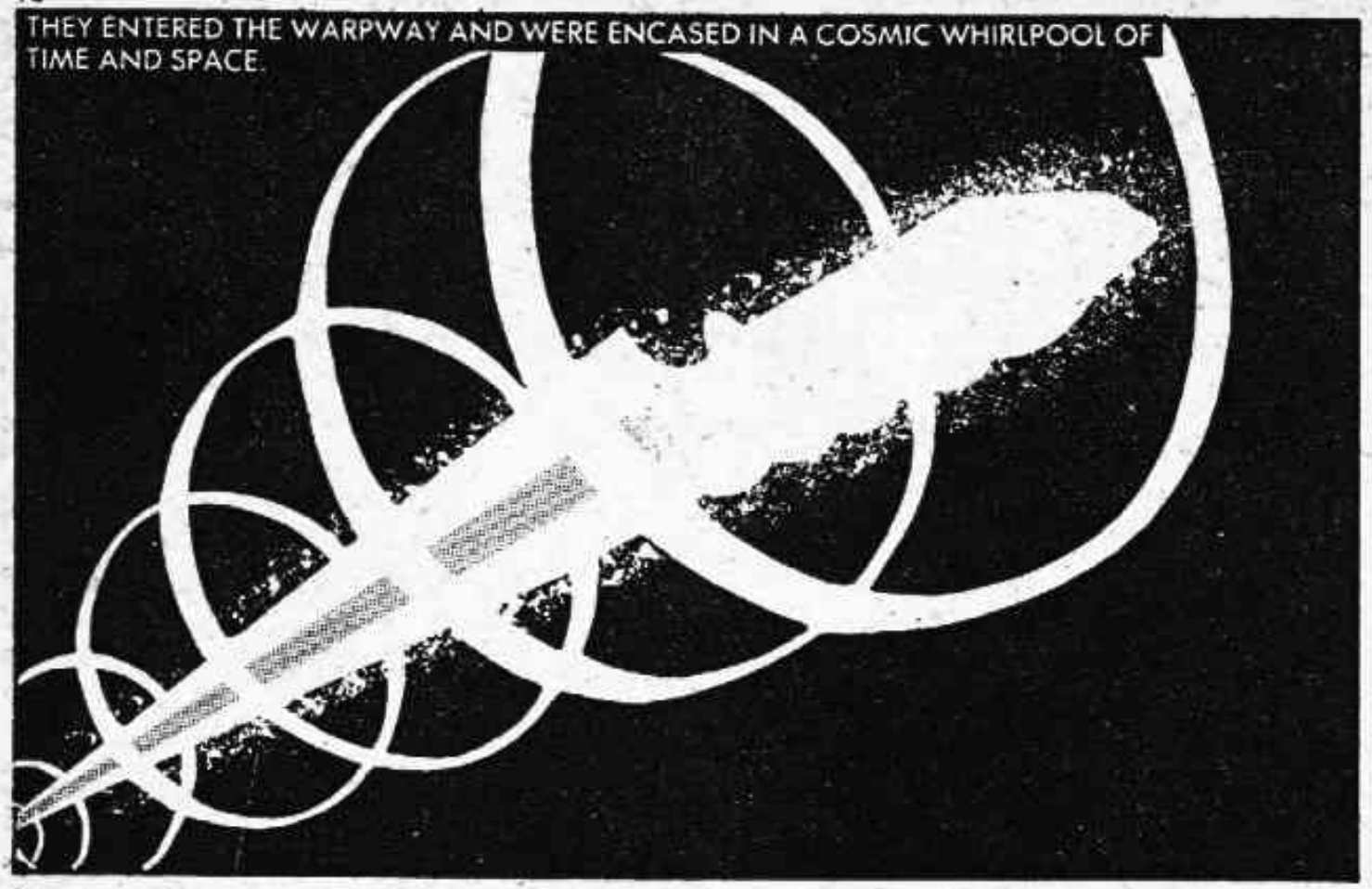
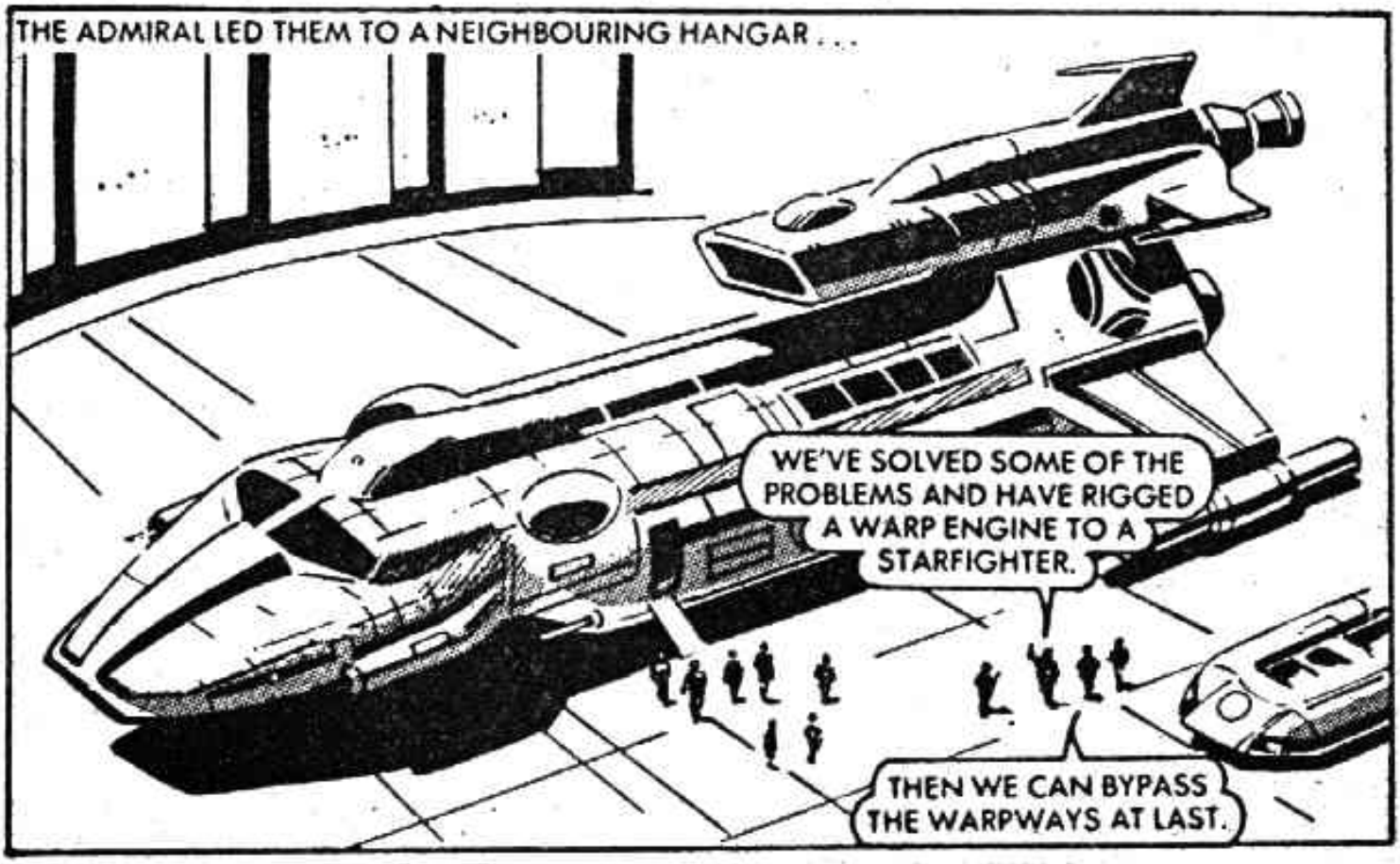
THE MURDERING PARASITES! THEY NEVER EVEN TRIED TO STOP IT.
THEY DIDN'T WANT TO! THEY'RE MORE INTERESTED IN DEAD EARTHMEN THAN TOLLS!


THEY ENTERED THE WARPWAY AND WERE ENCASED IN A COSMIC WHIRLPOOL OF TIME AND SPACE.

WITHIN HOURS THEY SIGHTED EARTH.
TAKE ME STRAIGHT DOWN TO CENTRAL CONTROL, CAPTAIN. THEY WANT ME THERE IMMEDIATELY.

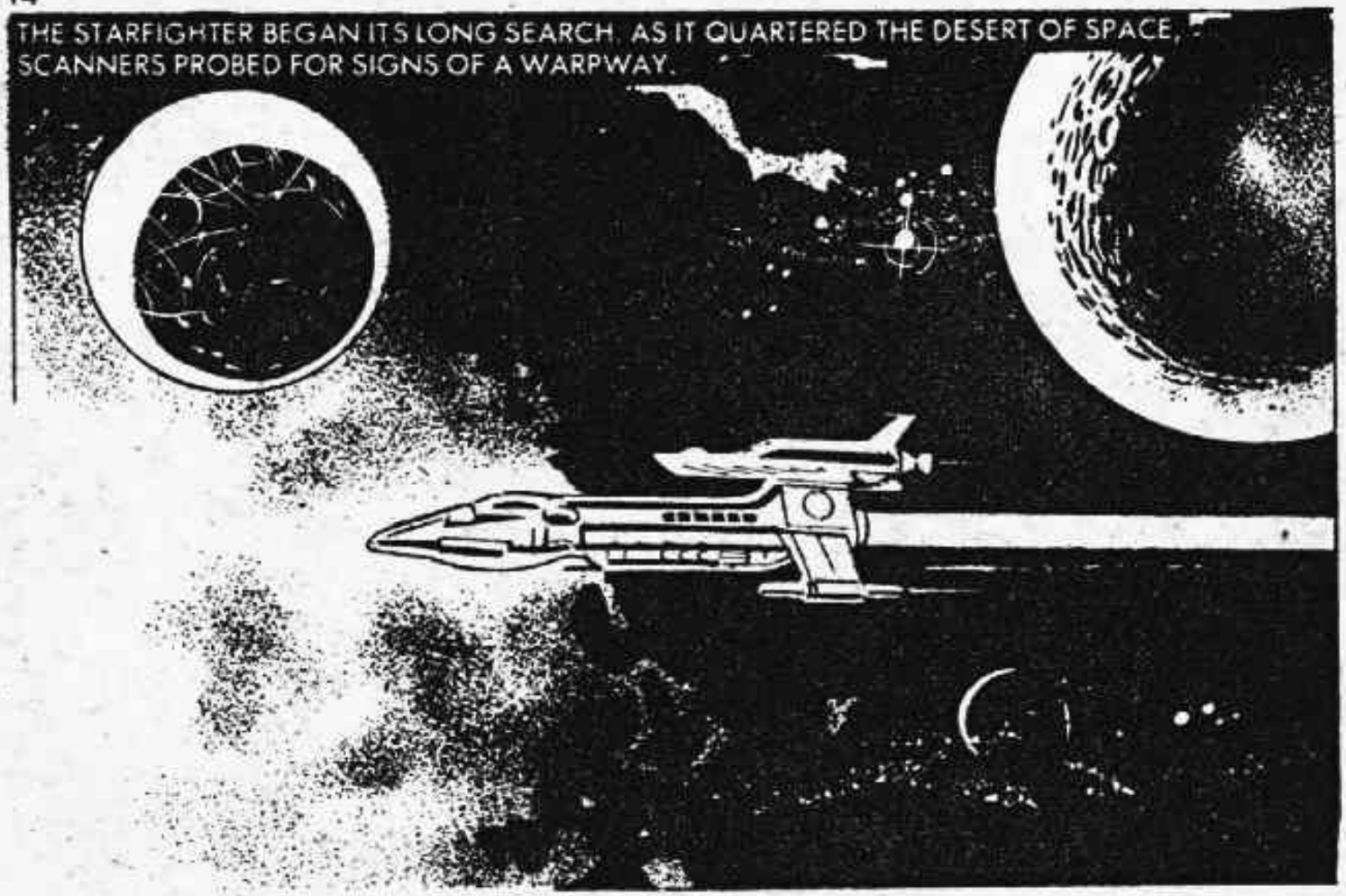
IN CENTRAL CONTROL—
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT THE TURRII'S INTENTIONS, SIRS. THEY'RE GOING TO BLEED EARTH TO DEATH WITH HIGH CHARGES, AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT. IT'S ALL PERFECTLY LEGAL!
AND THE ENTIRE GALAXY WILL BE AGAINST US IF WE USE FORCE TO GET THROUGH THE WARPWAY.
THE SITUATION IS DESPERATE. WE HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WARPWAY BEFORE OUR ENTIRE ECONOMY COLLAPSES.
A SEARCH WOULD TAKE YEARS AND YEARS.
NOT NECESSARILY!

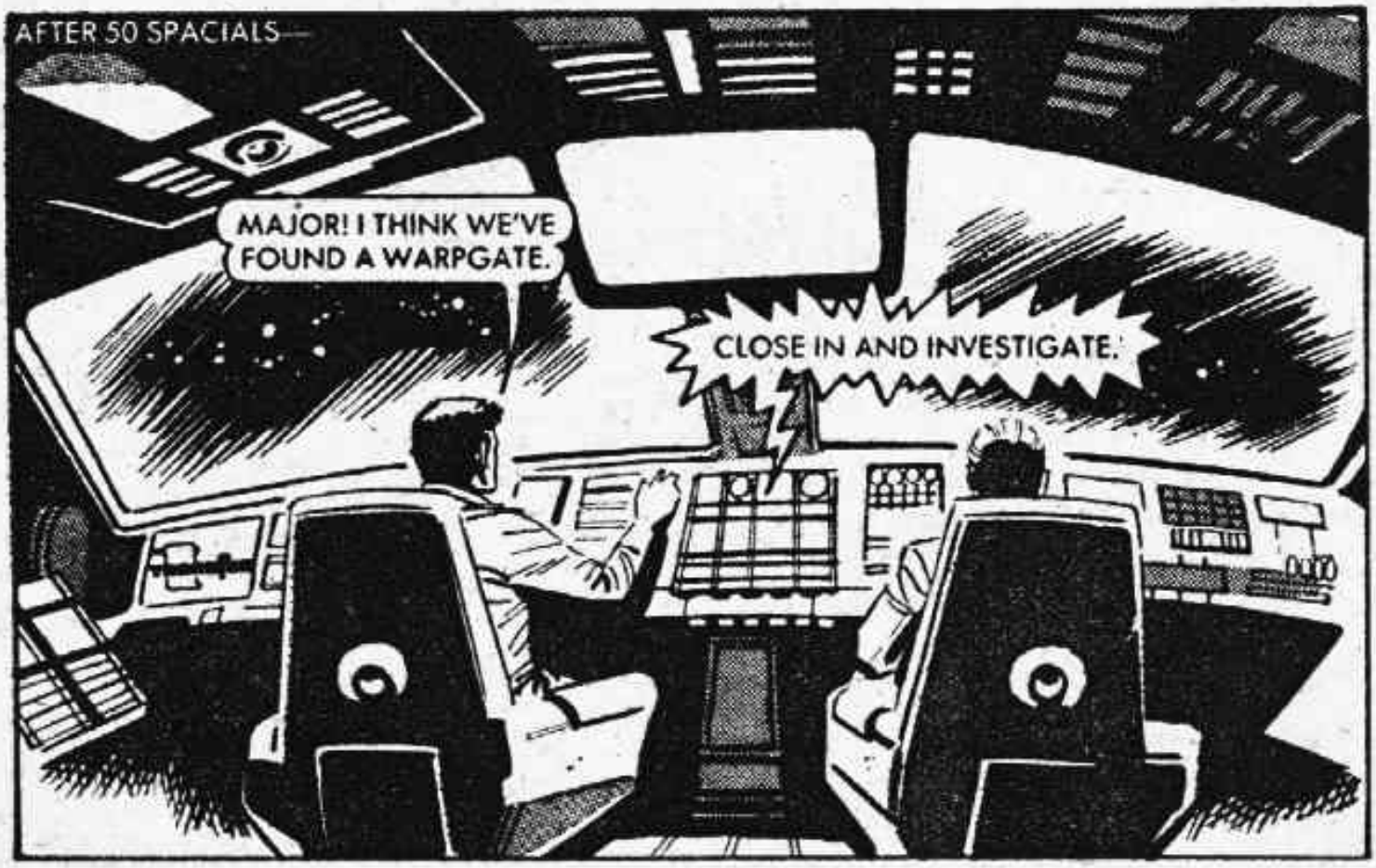
WE'VE BEEN WORKING FOR SOME TIME TRYING TO DEVELOP AN ENGINE THAT WOULD RECREATE THE CONDITIONS OF A WARPWAY. THEN WE WOULD HAVE TOTAL FREEDOM OF GALACTIC TRAVEL.
I WORKED ON THAT PROJECT FOR A WHILE. THE WHOLE PROCESS IS COMPLETELY UNSTABLE.


THE ADMIRAL LED THEM TO A NEIGHBOURING HANGAR . . .
WE'VE SOLVED SOME OF THE PROBLEMS AND HAVE RIGGED A WARP ENGINE TO A STARFIGHTER.
THEN WE CAN BYPASS THE WARPWAYS AT LAST.

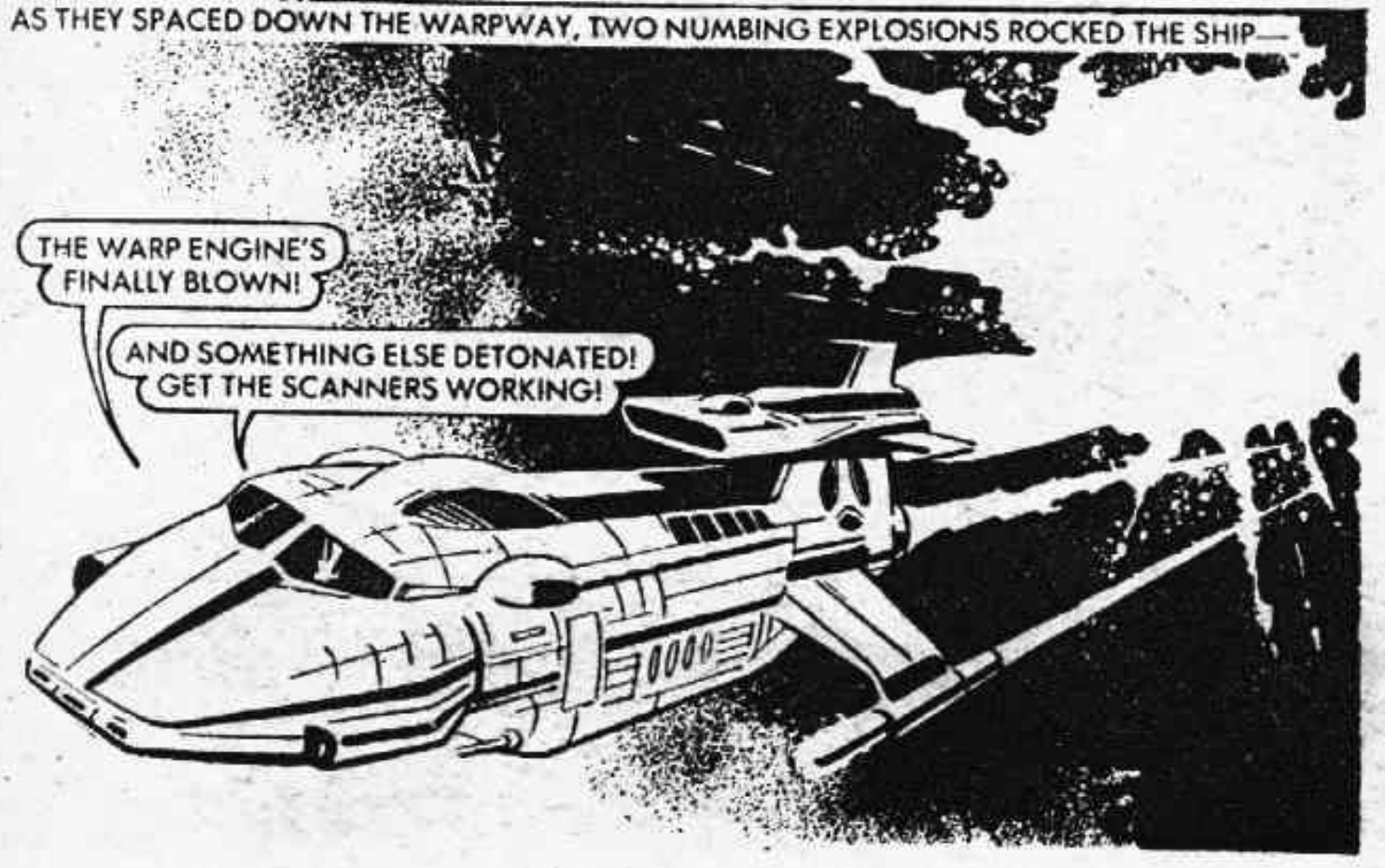
UNFORTUNATELY NOT! IT'S NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH FOR A GALACTIC LEAP AND THE ENGINE BLOWS APART AFTER A HUNDRED HOURS USE!
BUT IT WOULD ENABLE A FAST SEARCH OF OUR SYSTEM FOR ANOTHER WARPWAY!

AND THAT IS WHAT WE WANT YOU TO DO, MAJOR STEEL.
IT'S VITAL YOU SUCCEED.

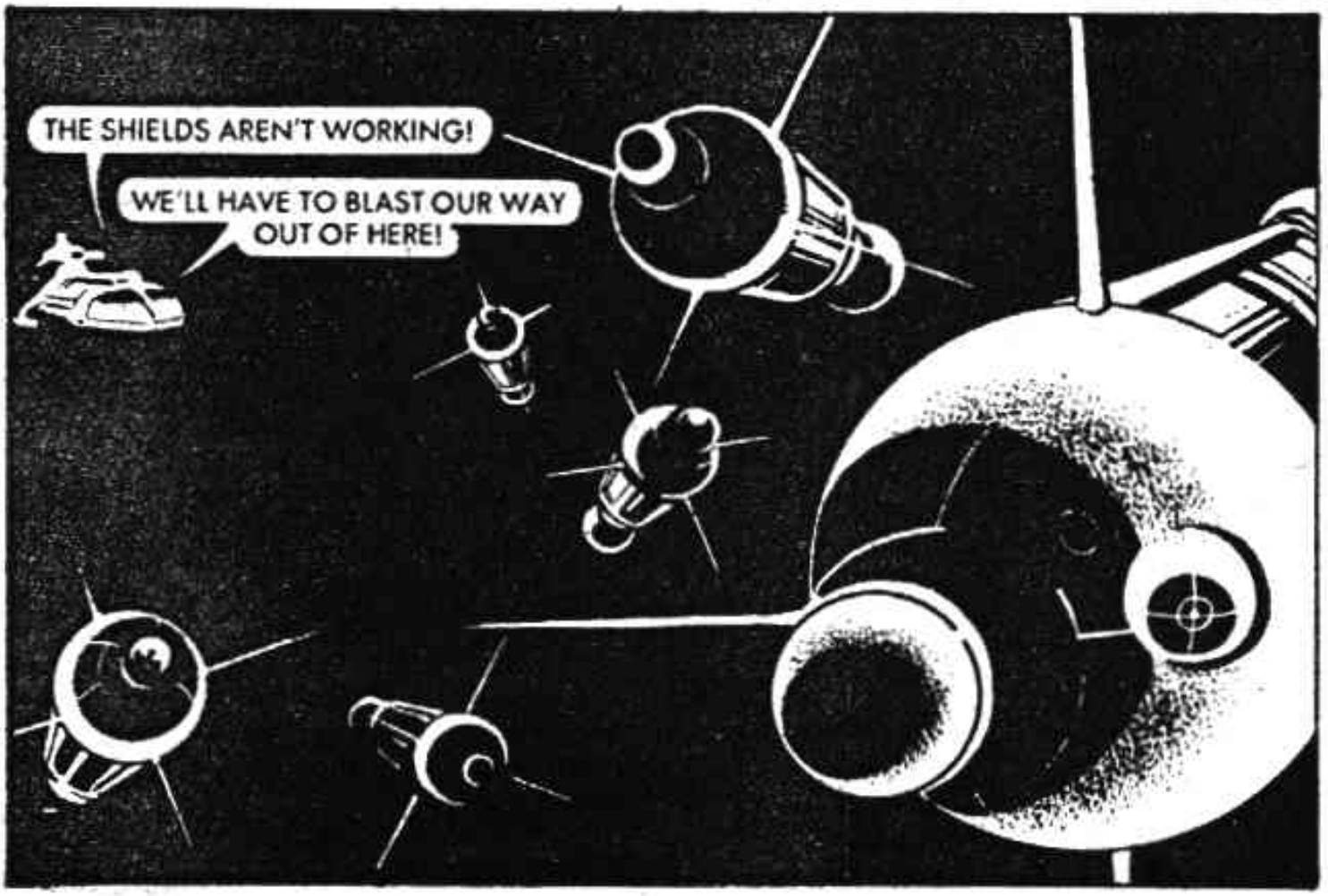

THE STARFIGHTER BEGAN ITS LONG SEARCH. AS IT QUARTERED THE DESERT OF SPACE, SCANNERS PROBED FOR SIGNS OF A WARPWAY.


AFTER 50 SPACIALS—
MAJOR! I THINK WE'VE FOUND A WARPGATE.
CLOSE IN AND INVESTIGATE.

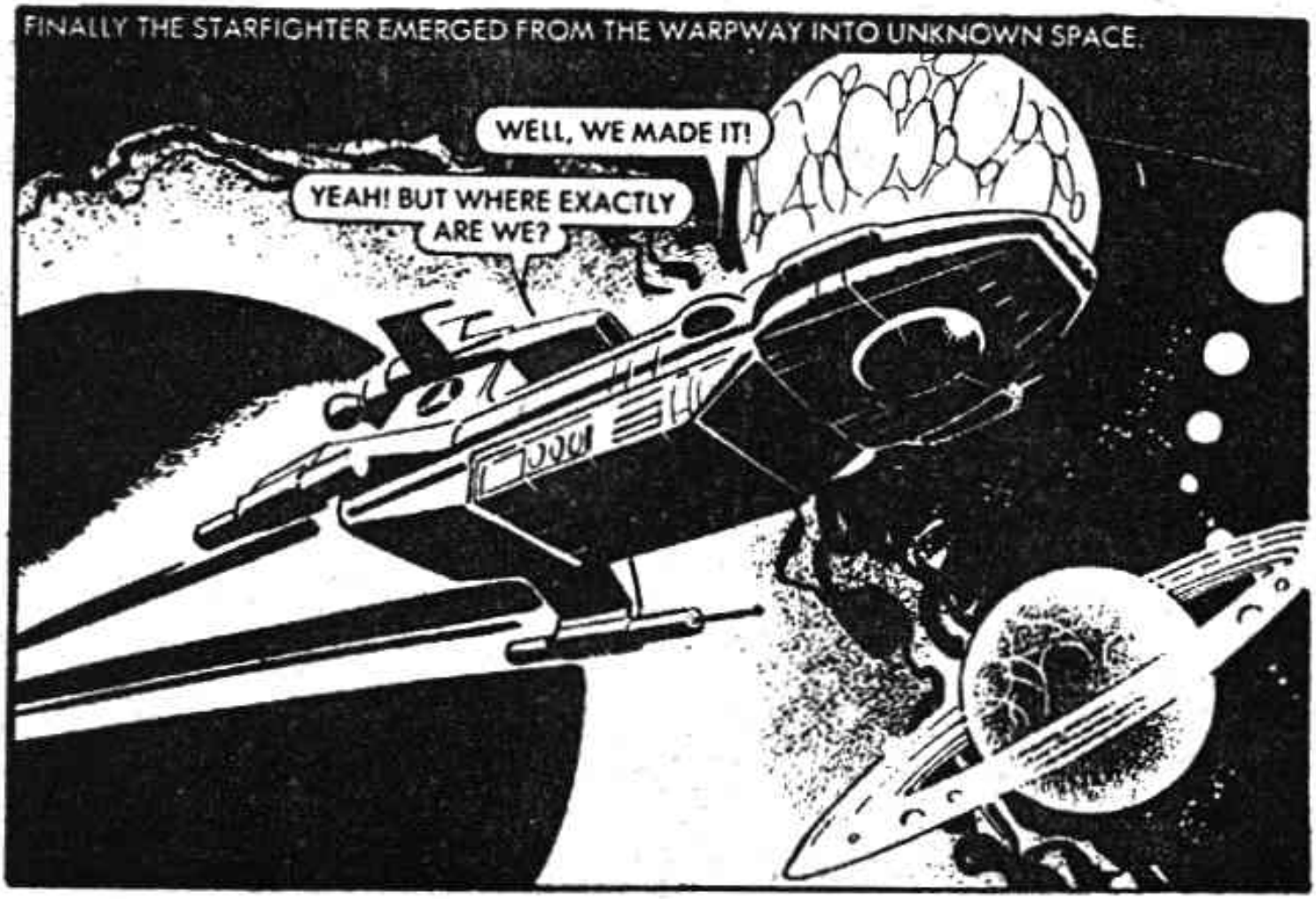
YES—IT'S A WARPWAY! WHERE D'YOU THINK THIS'LL LEAD TO, TASKER?
THERE'S NO TELLING, SIR. TIME DISPLACEMENT'S TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE!


AS THEY SPACED DOWN THE WARPWAY, TWO NUMBING EXPLOSIONS ROCKED THE SHIP—
THE WARP ENGINE'S FINALLY BLOWN!
AND SOMETHING ELSE DETONATED! GET THE SCANNERS WORKING!

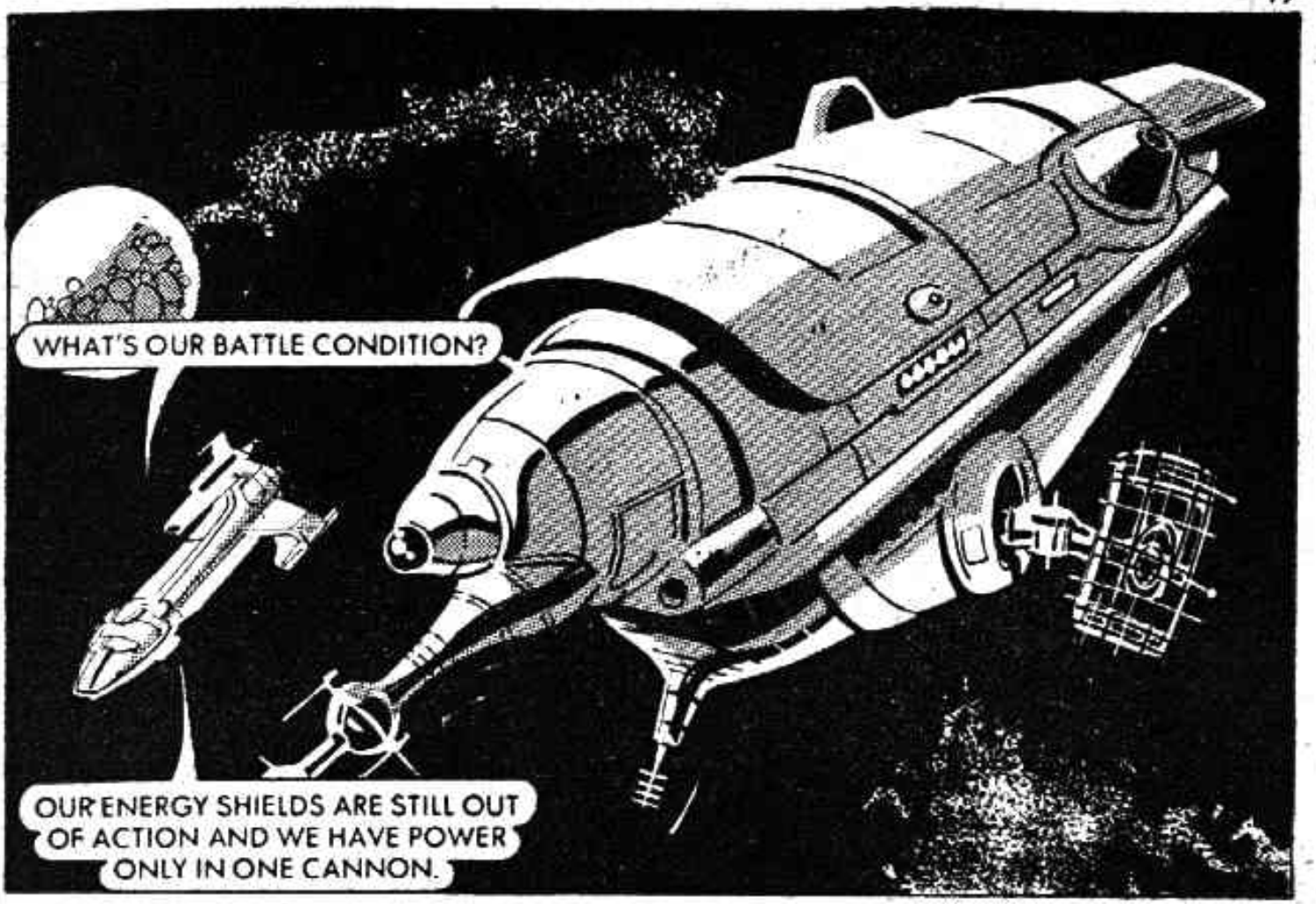
JUPE'S TUSKS! IT'S A MINE! THE WARPWAY'S BEEN MINED!
GET THE DEFLECTOR SHIELDS UP BEFORE WE RUN INTO ANOTHER ONE!


THE SHIELDS AREN'T WORKING!
WE'LL HAVE TO BLAST OUR WAY OUT OF HERE!

THE SHIP'S THORONION CANNON BLASTED A PATH TO FREEDOM.
WE CAN'T KEEP THIS UP, SIR. THE CANNON ARE ALMOST DRAINED OF POWER.
WE'VE GOT TO!


FINALLY THE STARFIGHTER EMERGED FROM THE WARPWAY INTO UNKNOWN SPACE.
WELL, WE MADE IT!
YEAH! BUT WHERE EXACTLY ARE WE?

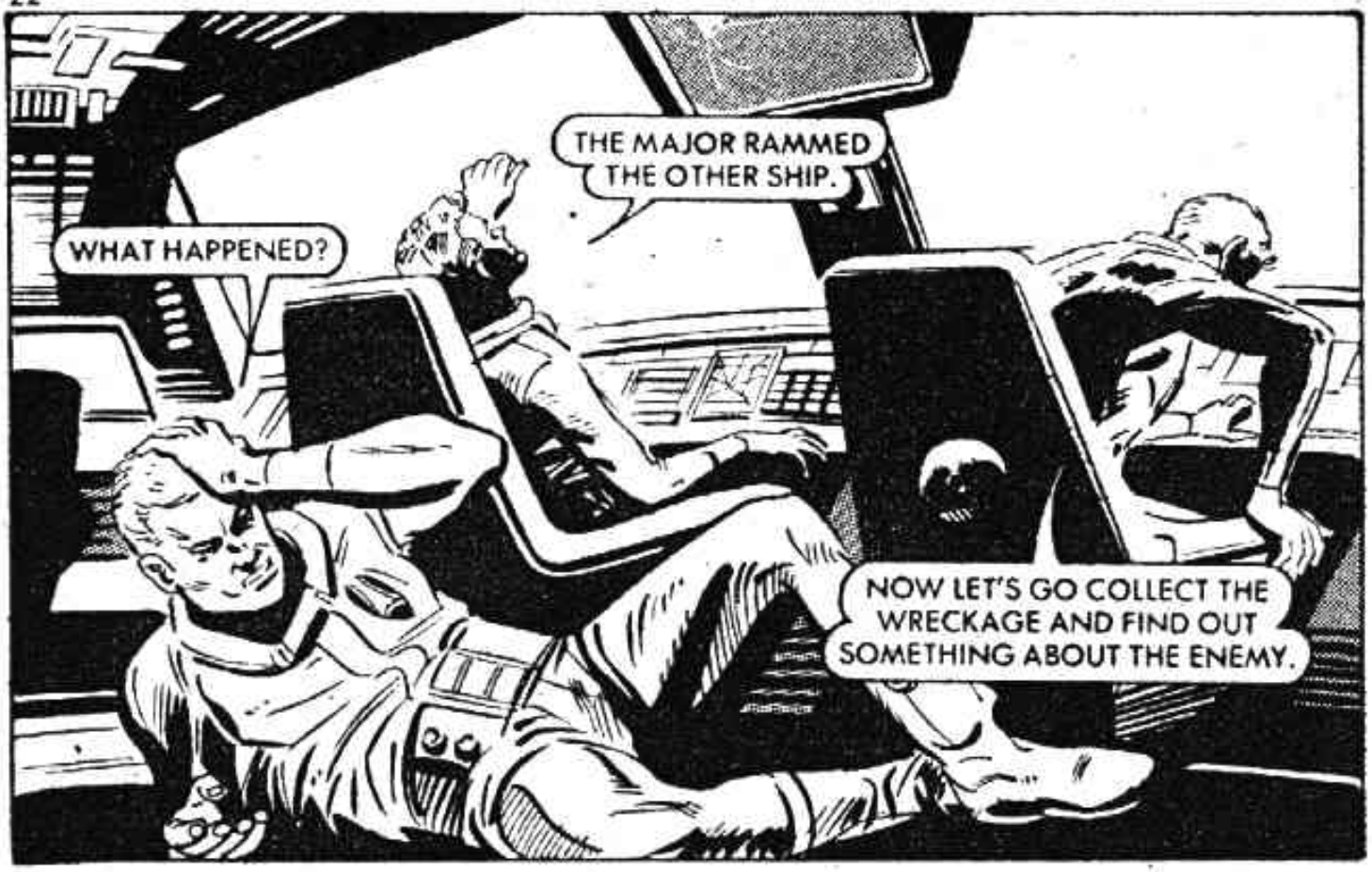
I DON'T RECOGNISE ANY OF THE STAR SYSTEMS OUT THERE.
WHERE ARE WE, COMPUTER?
I CANNOT CORRELATE NEW INFORMATION WITH AVAILABLE DATA.
YOU MEAN WE'RE LOST!
THERE'S AN ALIEN VESSEL COMING UP ON RED 4 ZERO.


WHAT'S OUR BATTLE CONDITION?
OUR ENERGY SHIELDS ARE STILL OUT OF ACTION AND WE HAVE POWER ONLY IN ONE CANNON.

KEEP YOUR FINGER ON THAT ION BUTTON AND IF THEY LOOK HOSTILE—GIVE IT EVERYTHING!
16.5
42
17
COMPUTER IDENTIFIES THIS CRAFT AS ROBOTIC . . . NO SENTIENT LIFE WHATSOEVER.

WITHOUT WARNING THE ROBOT CRAFT RELEASED A PULSATING BEAM OF ENERGY STRAIGHT AT THE STARFIGHTER.
FIRE THE GUN . . . WE'RE IN A CONCUSSION BEAM . . .
CAN'T . . . MOVE . . . CAN'T . . . FIRE . . .

COMPUTER STEERING . . . FULL SPEED . . . RAM THAT . . . AUTOM . . .
AS STEEL AND HIS MEN COLLAPSED UNCONSCIOUS THE SHIP'S COMPUTER FIRED THE STARDRIVES.
THE STARFIGHTER PULVERISED THE ROBOTIC DEFENCE STATION.


THE MAJOR RAMMED THE OTHER SHIP.
WHAT HAPPENED?
NOW LET'S GO COLLECT THE WRECKAGE AND FIND OUT SOMETHING ABOUT THE ENEMY.

YOU DID A GOOD JOB HERE, SIR. MOST OF IT'S SPREAD OVER THE GALAXY.
BRING WHAT'S LEFT ABOARD.

THE SALVAGE CREW COLLECTED THE WRECKAGE FOR ANALYSIS.
THIS LOOKS LIKE ITS MEMORY BANK AND I THINK WE CAN REPAIR IT EASILY ENOUGH.
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND IT.

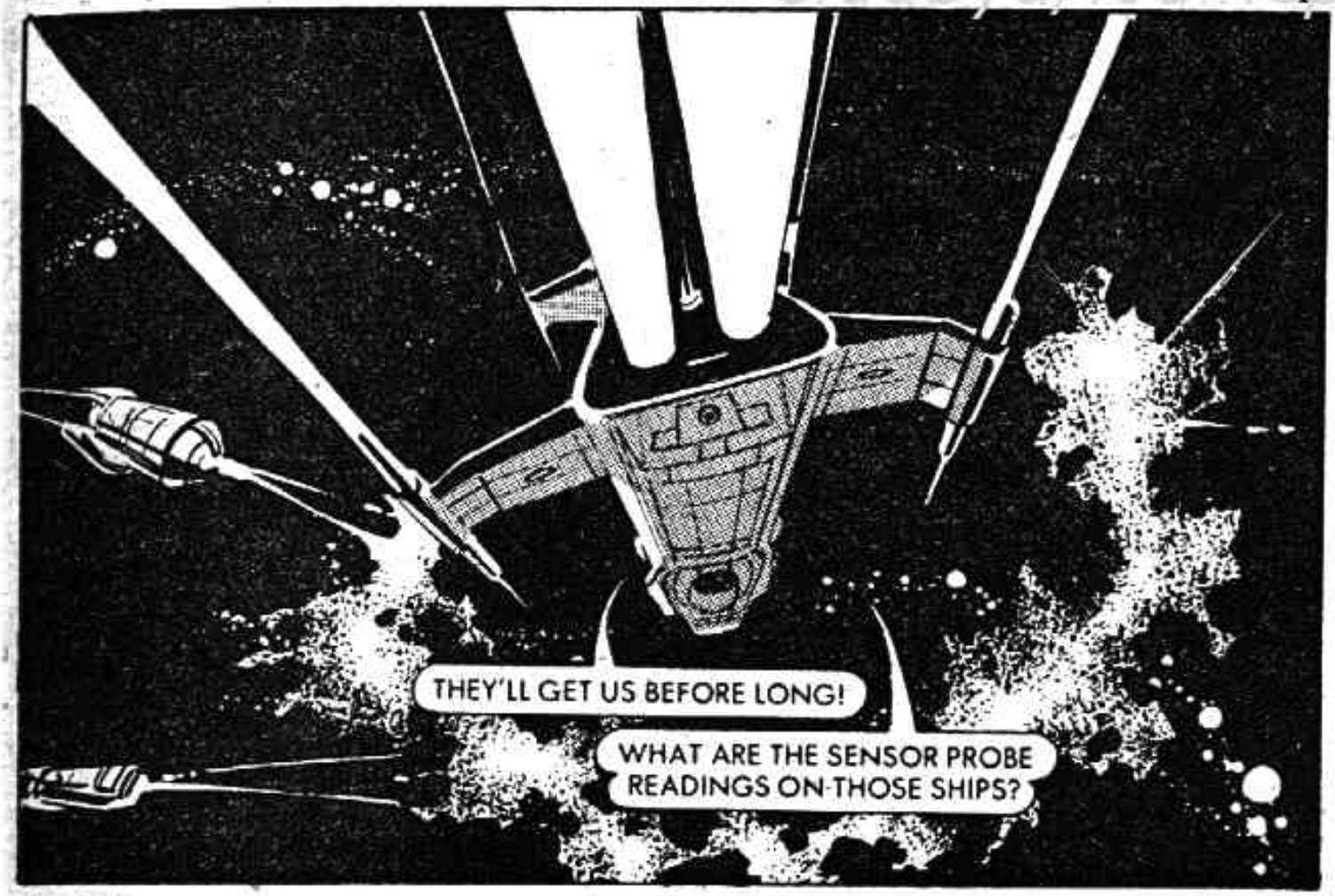
FIRST I WANT THE ENERGY SHIELD REPAIRED AND ALL CANNON OPERATIONAL. THE ONLY THING WE KNOW ABOUT THIS CHUNK OF SPACE IS THAT IT'S ONE HUNDRED PER CENT HOSTILE.

THE WRECKED WARP ENGINE WAS CUT LOOSE AND THE CREW RACED TO REPAIR THE SHIELD PROJECTORS THAT ALONE COULD PROTECT THE SHIP.
HOW LONG BEFORE WE'RE FINISHED?
A FEW HOURS! THAT MINE BURNED MOST OF THE PROJECTORS OUT.
JUST LOOK WHAT WE'VE PICKED UP ON THE LONG-RANGE SCANNER.
THEY'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR US.

WE'VE GOT COMPANY—HOW'S THAT SHIELD?
WE CAN GIVE 50% COVER ONLY! THE UNDERSIDE OF THE SHIP'S STILL UNPROTECTED.

AS THE ENEMY FLEET CLOSED IN, STEEL BLASTED IN TO THE ATTACK.
LOOK AT HIM BLOW!

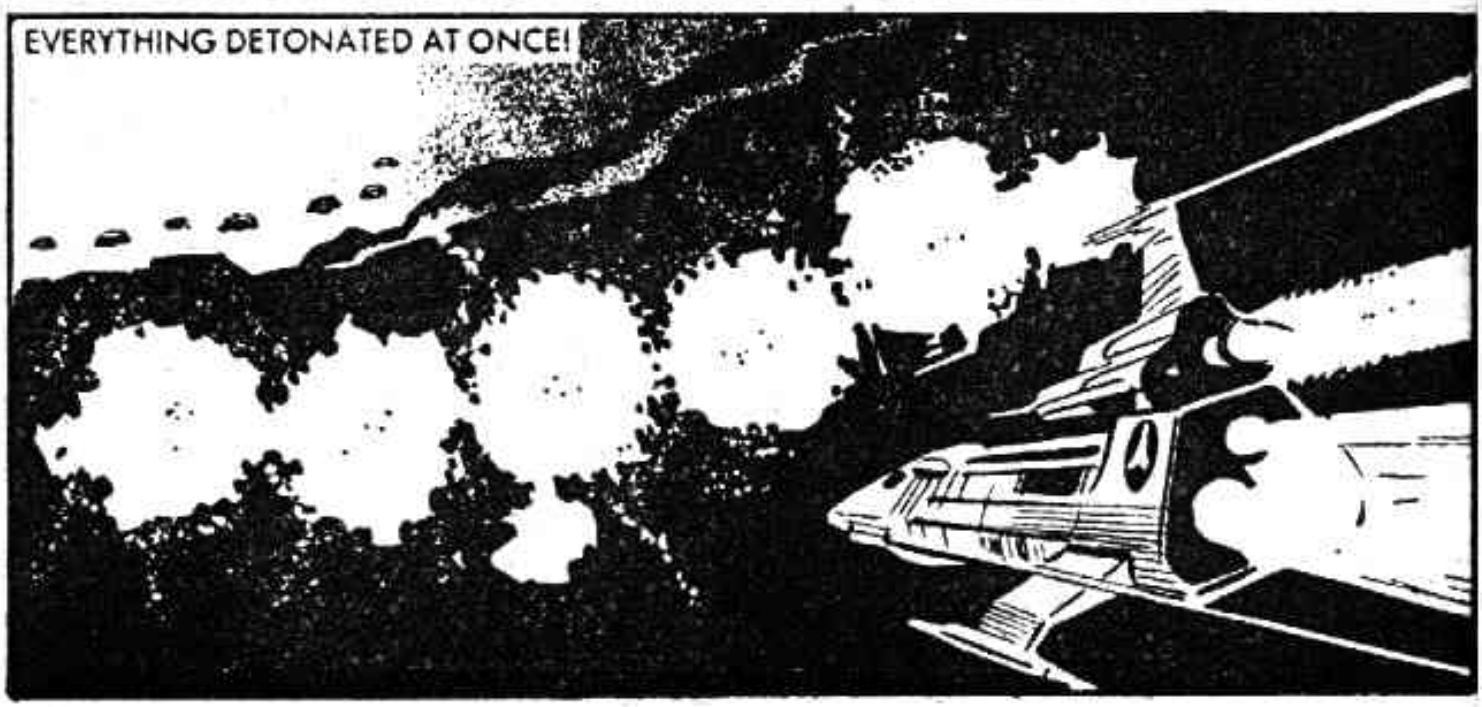
THEY'VE GOT SOME BIG CANNON! I FELT THAT!
WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH SO LONG AS WE KEEP THE SHIELD TOWARDS THEM.
THEY'VE TWIGGED WE'RE ONLY HALF PROTECTED! NOW IT'S GOING TO GET ROUGH!


THEY'LL GET US BEFORE LONG!
WHAT ARE THE SENSOR PROBE READINGS ON THOSE SHIPS?

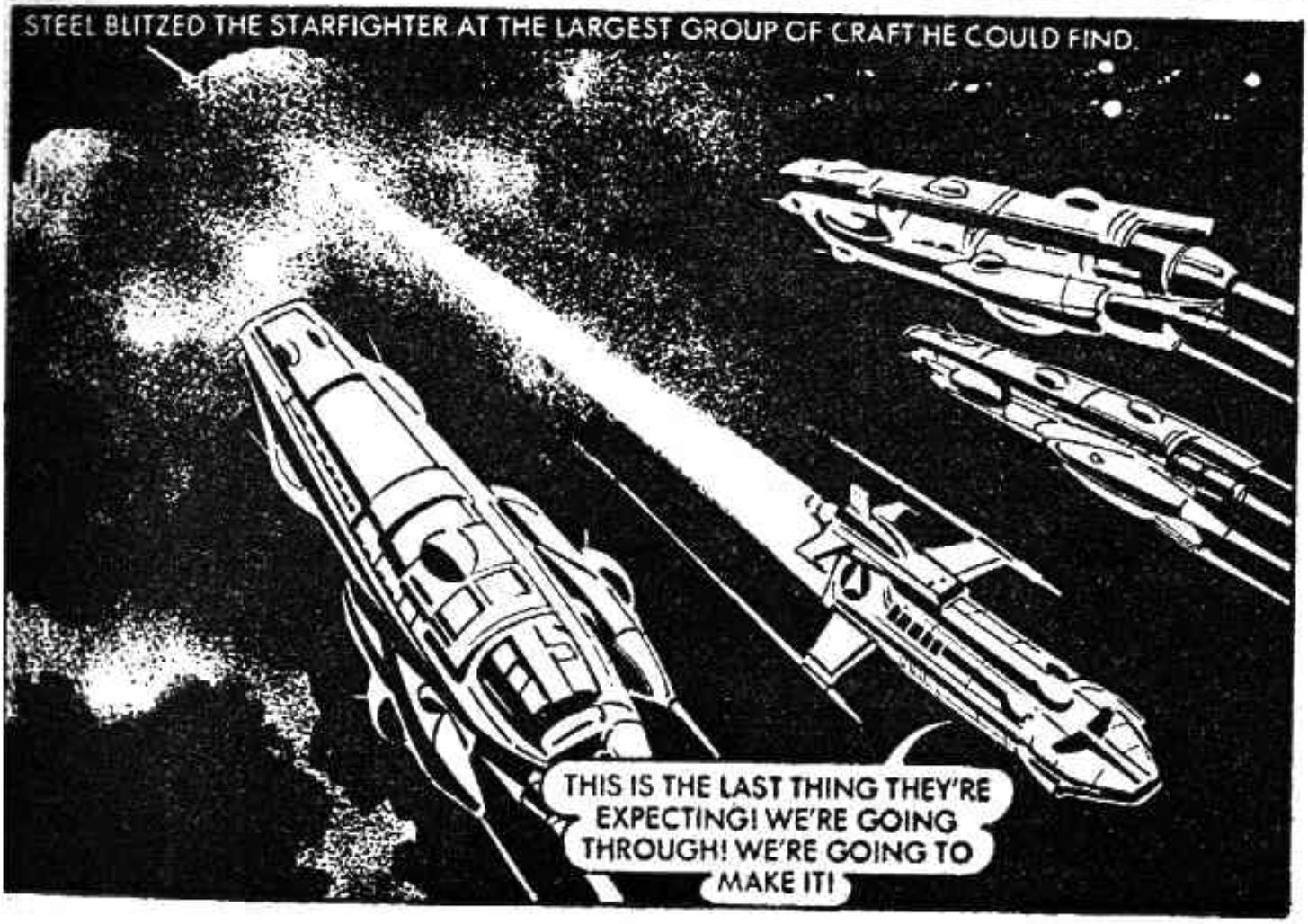
NO LIFE READINGS— THEY'RE ALL ROBOTS.
GOOD! THAT MEANS THEY'LL HAVE A ROBOT'S LOGIC. SO WE'LL DO THE MOST ILLOGICAL THING WE CAN!

FIRE EVERY TORPEDO, MISSILE AND CANNON AT THEIR WEAKEST SPOT. THEY'LL BE COVERING THAT BIT, SO WE'LL DRIVE STRAIGHT FOR WHERE THEY'RE THICKEST!
THEIR LOGIC SHOULD STOP THEM ACCEPTING THE INFORMATION LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO BREAK OUT!

AT STEEL'S COMMAND THE GUN CREWS RELEASED EVERY MISSILE AND ATOMIC TORPEDO THE STARFIGHTER CARRIED!


EVERYTHING DETONATED AT ONCE!

TURN! WE'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THEM.


STEEL BLITZED THE STARFIGHTER AT THE LARGEST GROUP OF CRAFT HE COULD FIND.
THIS IS THE LAST THING THEY'RE EXPECTING! WE'RE GOING THROUGH! WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT!

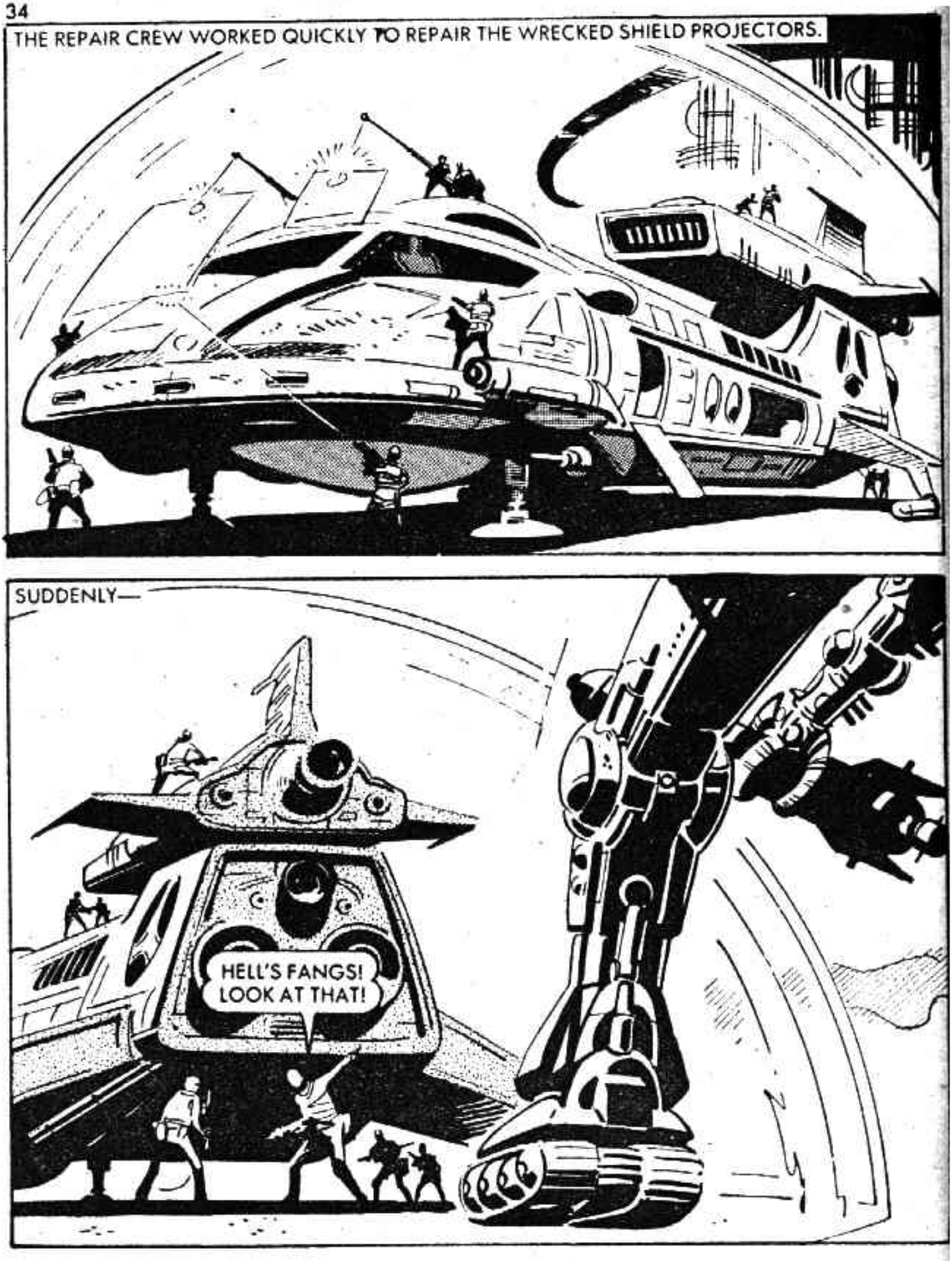
SUDDENLY THERE WAS NOTHING BUT EMPTY SPACE AHEAD OF THEM.
IF WE COULD GET OUR ENERGY SHIELD COMPLETELY REPAIRED WE'D BE SAFE FROM ATTACK.
THEY'LL BE ALL OVER US THE MOMENT WE STOP TO MAKE REPAIRS. WE NEED TIME TO GET IT FIXED.
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO BUY TIME. FIND ME THE NEAREST PLANET, COMPUTER. ONE WITH BIG CITIES!
THERE IS AN EARTH CLASS PLANET HALF A SPACIAL AWAY.
YOU'RE GOING LOOKING FOR TROUBLE? I DON'T GET IT!
IF WE LAND WE'LL BE ABLE TO SIT UNDER OUR HALF ENERGY SHIELD. THEY'D HAVE TO BLOW A CHUNK OFF THE PLANET TO GET AT US.

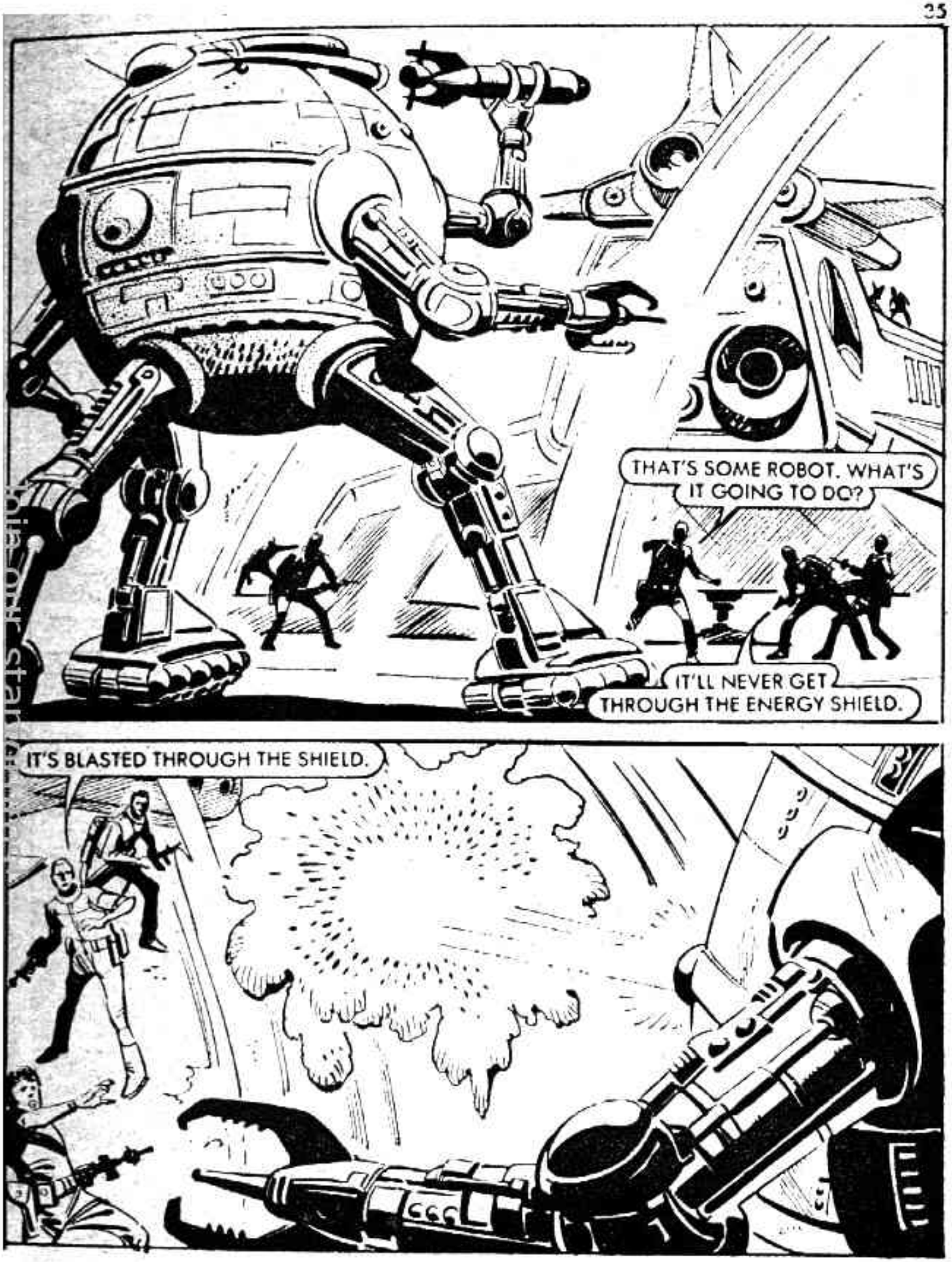
IF THAT CHUNK WAS VALUABLE--LIKE A CITY CENTRE—THEY'D THINK OF DOING SOMETHING ELSE! THAT WOULD GIVE US TIME TO REPAIR THE REST OF THE SHIELD!
I'VE LOCATED WHAT LOOKS LIKE A CITY, SIR. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT IT!

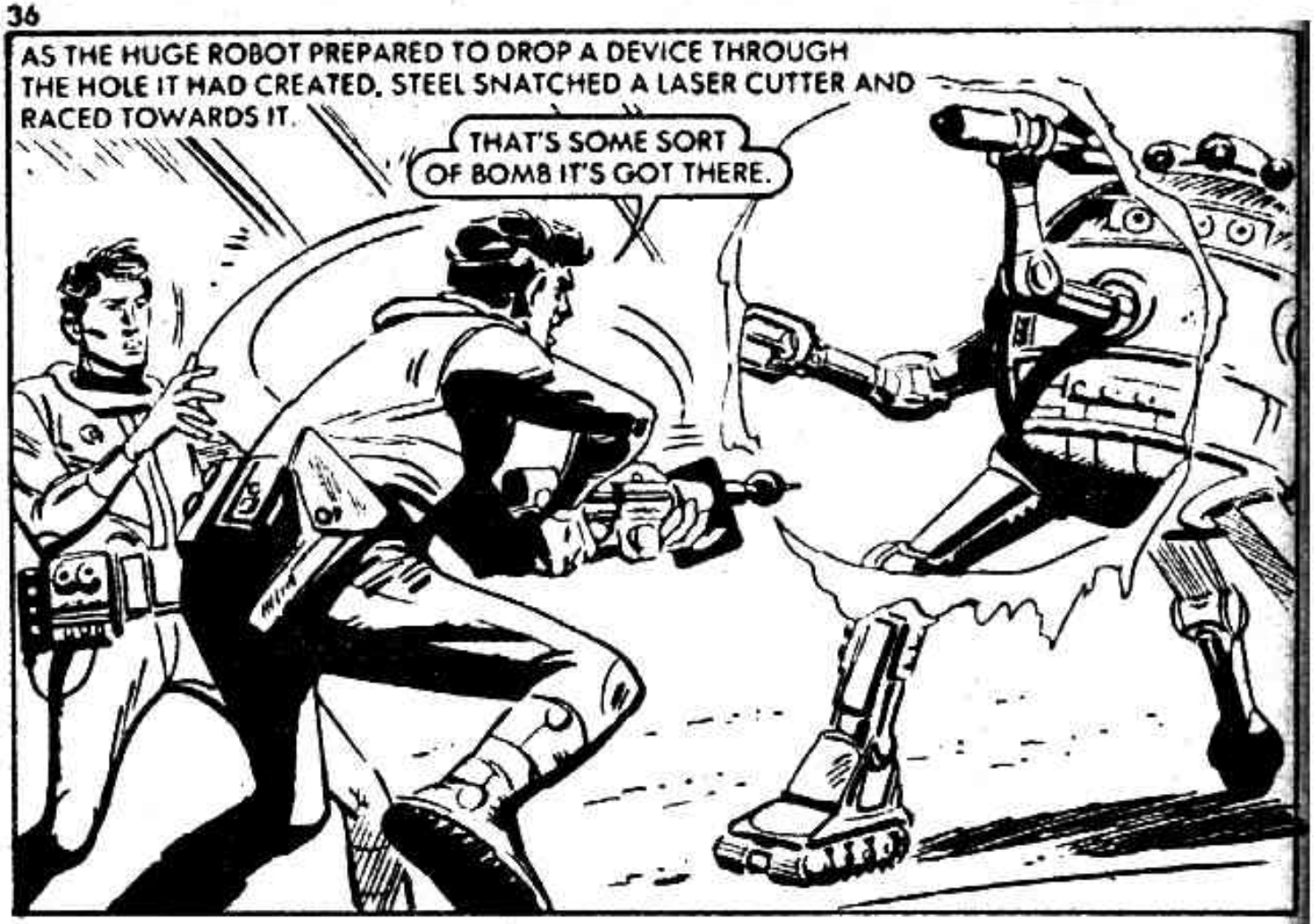
THE PLACE IS DEAD! THE SENSORS SHOW NO SIGNS OF LIFE AT ALL! FIND ME A PLACE TO LAND!

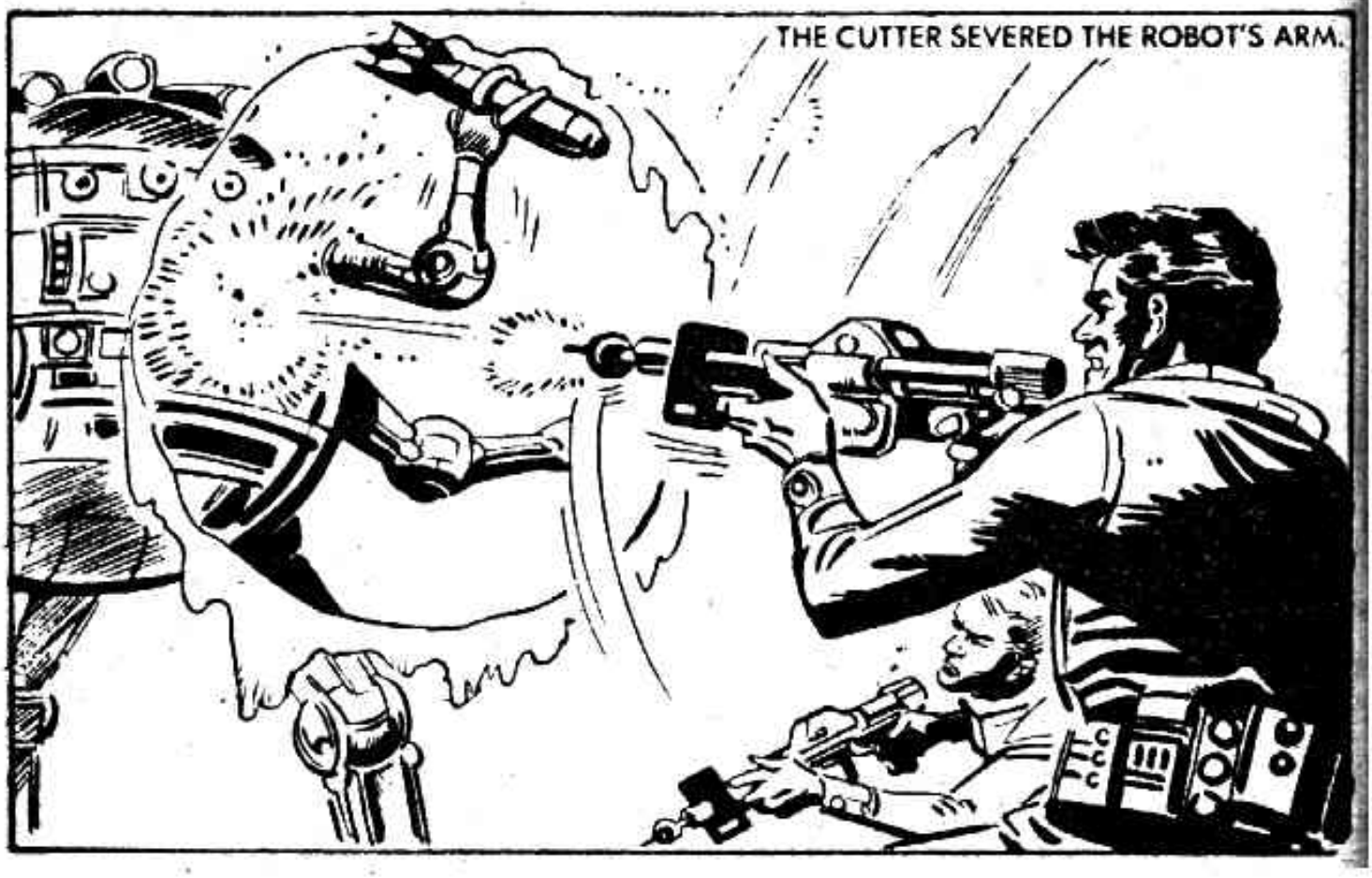
STEEL LANDED THE SHIP IN THE CENTRE OF THE DESERTED CITY AS A FLIGHT OF ROBOT CRAFT DIVED LOW AFTER THEM.
WE'LL SOON SEE IF YOU'RE RIGHT, MAJOR! HERE THEY COME!
AND THERE THEY GO! THEY'RE HEADING SPACESIDE!
I RECKON THEY'RE PART OF A DEFENSIVE SYSTEM.

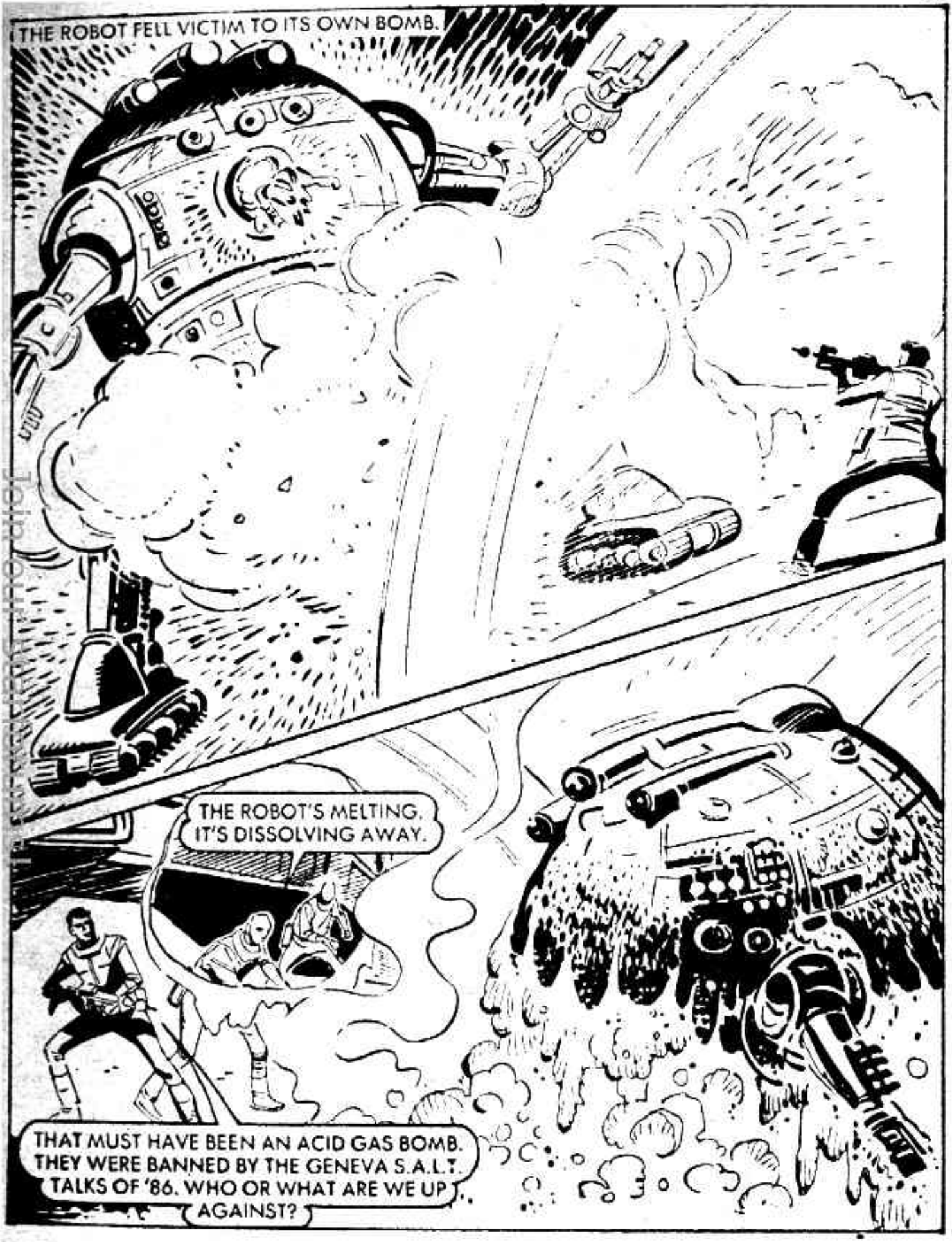
THEY'RE DESIGNED TO PROTECT THIS PLACE, WHICH MEANS THEY'LL FIND IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DAMAGE IT. THEY'LL USE THE MINIMUM FORCE NECESSARY TO DESTROY US— AND THEY'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT THAT IS. IT SHOULD GIVE US TIME TO FIX THE SHIELD.
THIS PLACE HAS POSED A LOT OF QUESTIONS AND GIVEN US NO ANSWERS. GET THAT CAPTURED MEMORY BANK WORKING AND LET'S SEE IF IT CAN PROVIDE SOME!


THE REPAIR CREW WORKED QUICKLY TO REPAIR THE WRECKED SHIELD PROJECTORS.
SUDDENLY—
HELL'S FANGS! LOOK AT THAT!


THAT'S SOME ROBOT. WHAT'S IT GOING TO DO?
IT'LL NEVER GET THROUGH THE ENERGY SHIELD.
IT'S BLASTED THROUGH THE SHIELD.


AS THE HUGE ROBOT PREPARED TO DROP A DEVICE THROUGH THE HOLE IT HAD CREATED, STEEL SNATCHED A LASER CUTTER AND RACED TOWARDS IT.
THAT'S SOME SORT OF BOMB IT'S GOT THERE.


THE CUTTER SEVERED THE ROBOT'S ARM.

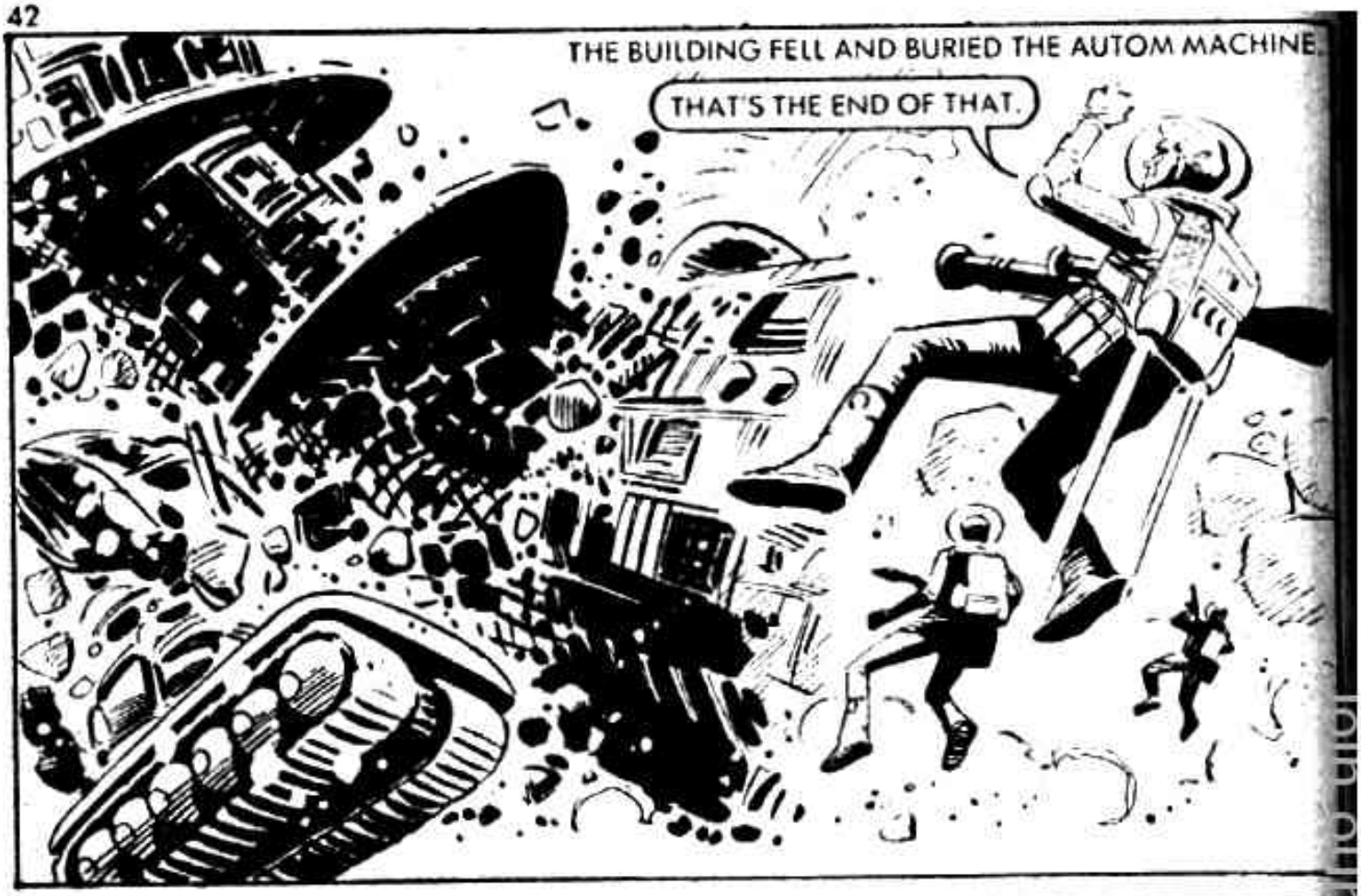

THE ROBOT FELL VICTIM TO ITS OWN BOMB.
THE ROBOT'S MELTING. IT'S DISSOLVING AWAY.
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN AN ACID GAS BOMB. THEY WERE BANNED BY THE GENEVA S.A.L.T. TALKS OF '86. WHO OR WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST?

THAT COULD HAVE BEEN US! I WANT EVERYONE NOT ON REPAIRS INTO BATTLE SUITS. WE'LL HAVE TO GO OUTSIDE THE SHIELD TO PROTECT THE SHIP.
MINUTES LATER THEY WERE ARMED AND OUTSIDE THE SHIELD WAITING FOR THE NEXT ATTACK.
SPREAD OUT AND TAKE COVER. NO SHOOTING AS LONG AS THE ENERGY SHIELD CAN PROTECT THE SHIP.
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ANOTHER AUTOM KILLER APPEARED.
A MEGAKILLER! WHAT A SIZE! WAIT AND SEE WHAT IT DOES.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT IT ISN'T HAVING ANY EFFECT ON THE SHIELD.
IT'S CRACKING THE GROUND AROUND THE SHIP.
IT'S A LEVITATION BEAM. THEY'RE GOING TO PICK THE SHIP AND THE GROUND UP.
ALL UNITS FIRE! RIP THE AUTOM APART!

IT'S NO USE. THAT CAN'S TOO TOUGH TO BE OPENED.
EVERYONE CONCENTRATE ON THE RIGHT SUPPORT.
THERE SHE GOES.
BUT IT'S FIRING AT US.

THE DEADLY NEURON BEAM CUT THE BUILDING IN TWO.


THE BUILDING FELL AND BURIED THE AUTOM MACHINE.
THAT'S THE END OF THAT.

COME WITH ME.

STEEL MADE HIS WAY TO A HIGH OBSERVATION POINT AND WAITED FOR THE ENEMY'S NEXT MOVE.
DO YOU THINK THEY'VE GIVEN UP?
NO SUCH LUCK. IT MUST TAKE TIME TO MOVE THEIR MACHINES IN HERE.
LOOK DOWN THERE.
DON'T LET THEM NEAR THE SHIP. THEY CAN PIERCE THE SHIELD.
A TORRENT OF FIRE POURED INTO THE PACKED ROBOTS.

THE SURVIVING ROBOTS OPENED FIRE ON THEIR ATTACKERS.

THEY'VE GOT ATOMIC VAPORISERS. THIS IS NO PLACE FOR US. JUMP FOR IT.

THEY ACTIVATED THEIR JET-PACKS AND LEAPT FOR SAFETY AS THEIR SHELTER VAPORISED.
THEY'VE GOT RIGA.
JET AT THEM BEFORE THEY GET US.
FIRE!

SECOND LATER THE ROBOTS WERE A SMOKING PILE OF SCRAP.
FINISHED THEM OFF, SIR.
BUT HERE ARE MORE.
DOZENS OF THEM.
BACK TO THE SHIP. WE'LL FIGHT THEM FROM BEHIND THE SHIELD.
WE'RE COMING IN. OPEN THE SHIELD.

STEEL AND HIS MEN WAITED AS THE ROBOTS ENCIRCLED THE SHIP.
LOOKS AS IF THEY'RE ALL GOING TO PIERCE THE SHIELD TOGETHER.
WE'VE GOT TO KEEP THEM OUT. JUST ONE SNIFF OF THOSE VAPORISERS AND IT'S THE BIG GOODBYE.
THE ROBOTS SUDDENLY BROKE OFF THEIR ATTACK —
THEY'RE GOING AWAY. I DON'T GET IT.
IF YOU COME TO THE CONTROL ROOM I CAN EXPLAIN, SIR.

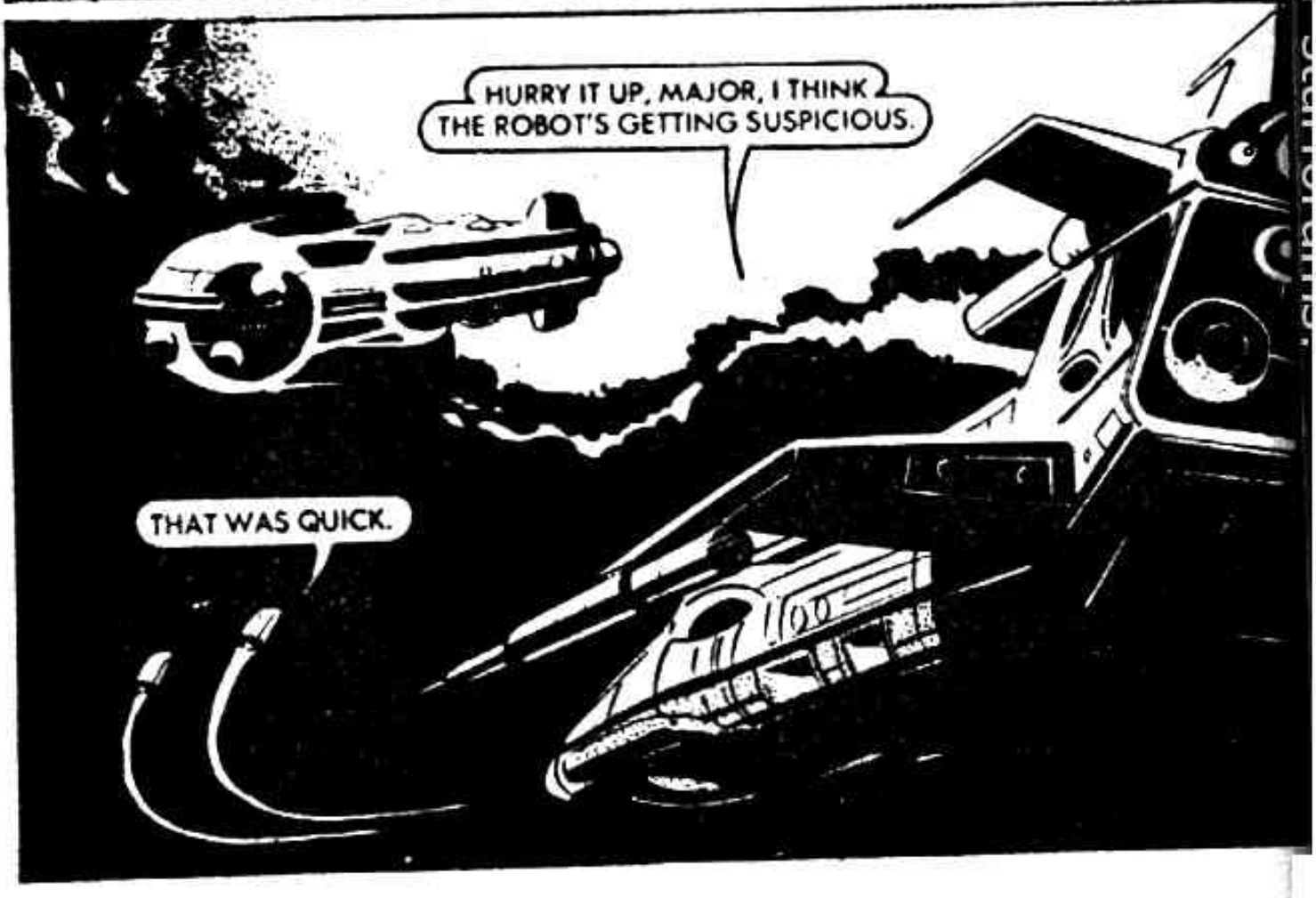
IN THE CONTROL ROOM —
JUST WHAT'S GOING ON, BARIN?
I FINALLY FIXED THAT ROBOT MEMORY BANK, SIR, AND DRAINED IT INTO OUR COMPUTERS. THEY'RE IMITATING IT AND SENDING OUT SIGNALS PRETENDING WE'RE A ROBOT. IT'S ELECTRONIC CAMOUFLAGE. IF THEY CAN'T FIND AN ENEMY THE ROBOTS MUST CONCLUDE THAT IT'S BEEN DESTROYED. THEY WON'T TROUBLE US ANY MORE!
DID YOU GET ANY ANSWERS OUT OF THE MEMORY?
THE PEOPLE WHO BUILT THE ROBOTS WERE GREAT ENGINEERS BUT LOUSY BIOLOGISTS. THEY COULDN'T PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM DISEASES THEY BROUGHT BACK FROM OTHER GALAXIES. THE ROBOTS ARE TO KEEP OUT ALL SPACE TRAVELLERS. THEY STOPPED SPACE FLIGHTS THEMSELVES, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. THE LAST OF THEM DIED A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

AND THE ROBOTS KEEP ON DEFENDING THE SYSTEM.
UP THERE IN SPACE ARE CLASS 1 ROBOTS THAT HAVE A PERFECTED WARP-DRIVE. THEY CAN LEAP GALAXIES!
STEEL WAITED UNTIL THE REPAIRS TO THE SHIELD WERE COMPLETED, THEN ORDERED LIFT-OFF.
ARE YOU SURE THE ELECTRONIC CAMOUFLAGE WILL FOOL ANY ROBOTS?
YES . . .

THEN MAKE FOR DEEP SPACE — WE'RE GOING HUNTING OURSELVES A CLASS 1 ROBOT.
HOW DO YOU INTEND FINDING IT, SIR?
IT FINDS US! FAKE A DISTRESS CALL SAYING WE NEED THE HELP OF A CLASS 1 TO DEAL WITH SUPERIOR INVADERS.

THE COMPUTERS CODED A DISTRESS SIGNAL AND BEGAN BROADCASTING ACROSS SPACE.
SPACE DISTORTED AND SUDDENLY A LARGE ALIEN SPACESHIP MATERIALISED IN FRONT OF THEM.
THAT'S WHAT I CALL SERVICE! IT USED WARP-DRIVE TO GET HERE.
I HOPE THIS WORKS, BARIN.

WE'RE RELAYING CAMOUFLAGE SIGNALS THROUGH YOUR HELMET TRANSMITTERS. IT SHOULD FOOL THEM LONG ENOUGH FOR YOU TO GET INSIDE.
GET THE COMPUTERS TO STALL THE ROBOT FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN.


HURRY IT UP, MAJOR, I THINK THE ROBOT'S GETTING SUSPICIOUS.
THAT WAS QUICK.

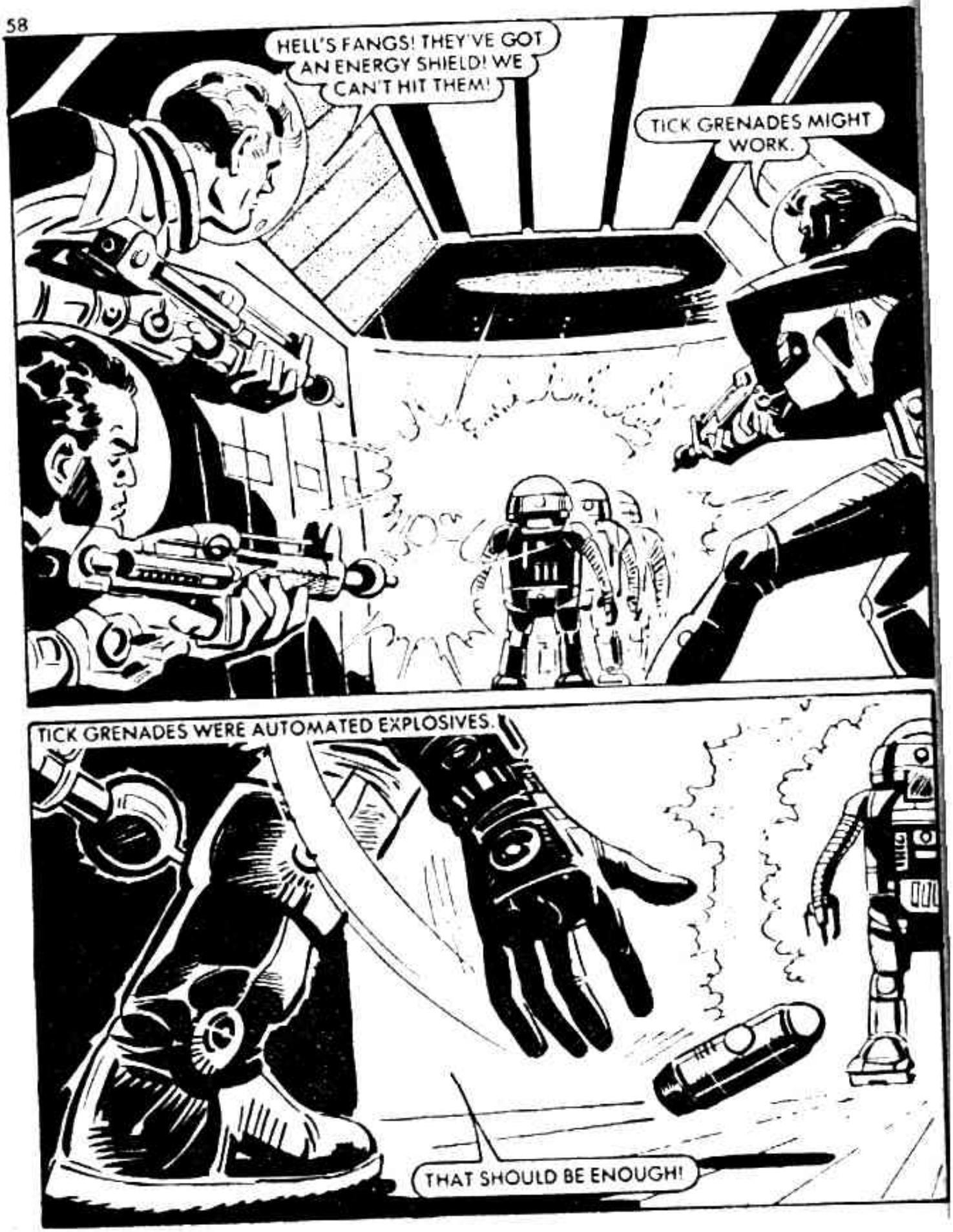
AS THEY RACED FOR ROBOT SHIP A BLAST OF ENERGY RIPPED FROM A GUN PORT.
MAJOR? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THEY GOT ONE CRAFT! WE'RE INSIDE THEIR FIRE ARC AND THEY CAN'T REACH US.

CAN YOU TAKE THE FIRE?
IT'S CAUSING INTENSE RADIATION IN HERE. WE CAN LAST OUT FOR ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES. THE ROBOT'S LOCKED ON TO US — THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN ESCAPE.
WE'VE GOT THIRTY MINUTES TO FIND AND DESTROY THE COMPUTER CORE. THAT'S NOT MUCH TIME!
FIRST WE FIND AN AIRLOCK.

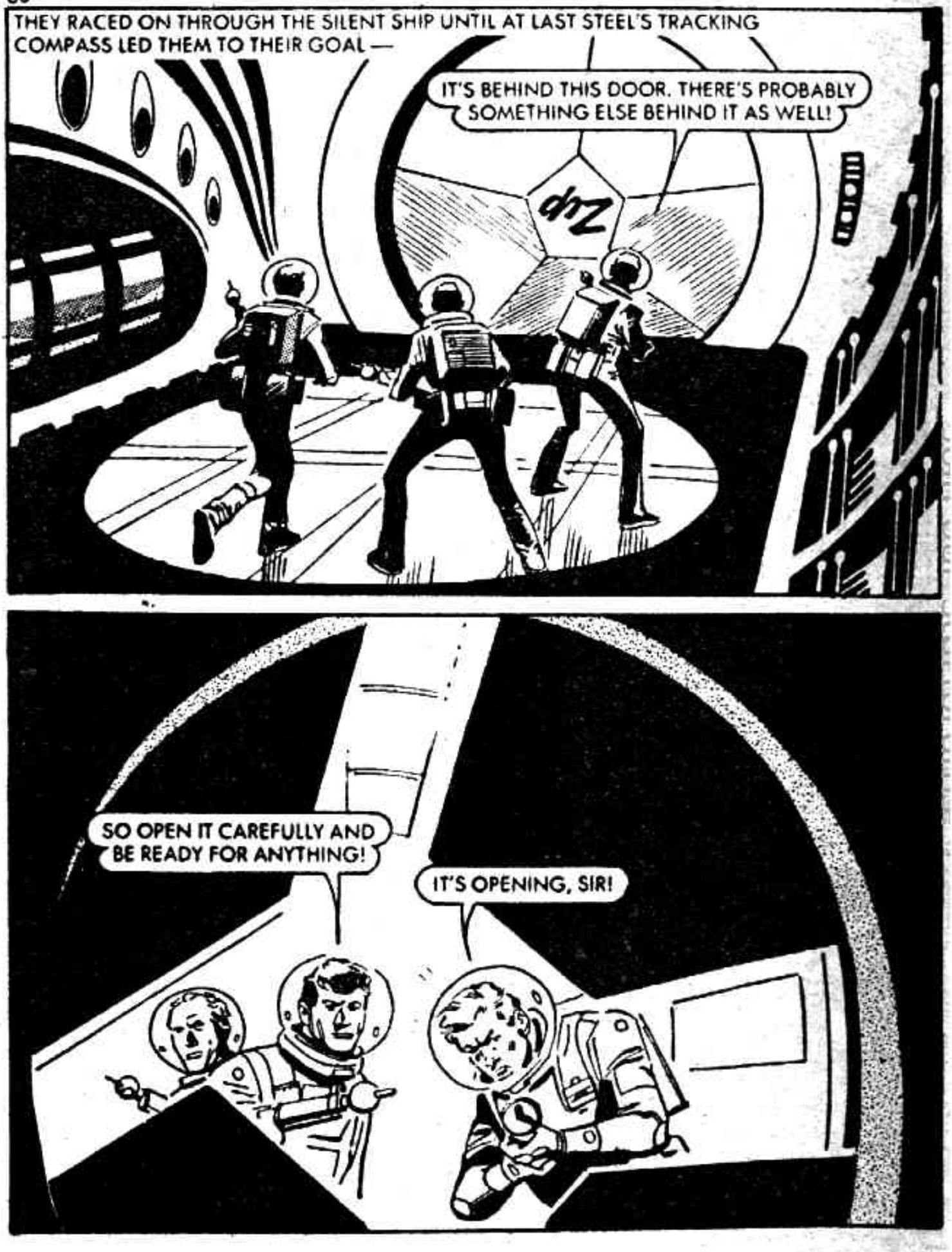
THIS IS THE ONE NEAREST TO THE CONTROL SECTION, SIR!
JUST OPEN IT CAREFULLY.
BUT THE DOOR SUDDENLY RIPPED OPEN AND A BLAST OF DEATH TORE THROUGH THE SPACER.

THE FIGURE OF A ROBOT GUARD FILLED THE DOOR, BUT BEFORE IT COULD KILL AGAIN —
THEY MUST BE GUARDING ALL THE DOORS AND AIRLOCKS.
THAT MEANS THEY'RE SPREAD OUT THINLY. WE'VE GOT A GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING THROUGH TO THE COMPUTER CORE!

WE'RE INSIDE THE SHIP, SIR, BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE CORE. CAN YOU HELP?
OUR SENSORS RECKON IT'S IN THE CONTROL ROOM! SET YOUR TRACKING COMPASS TO ZZ5/8 — YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT FLOOR LEVEL.
THIS WAY!
WE'VE GOT TROUBLE.
TAKE COVER!

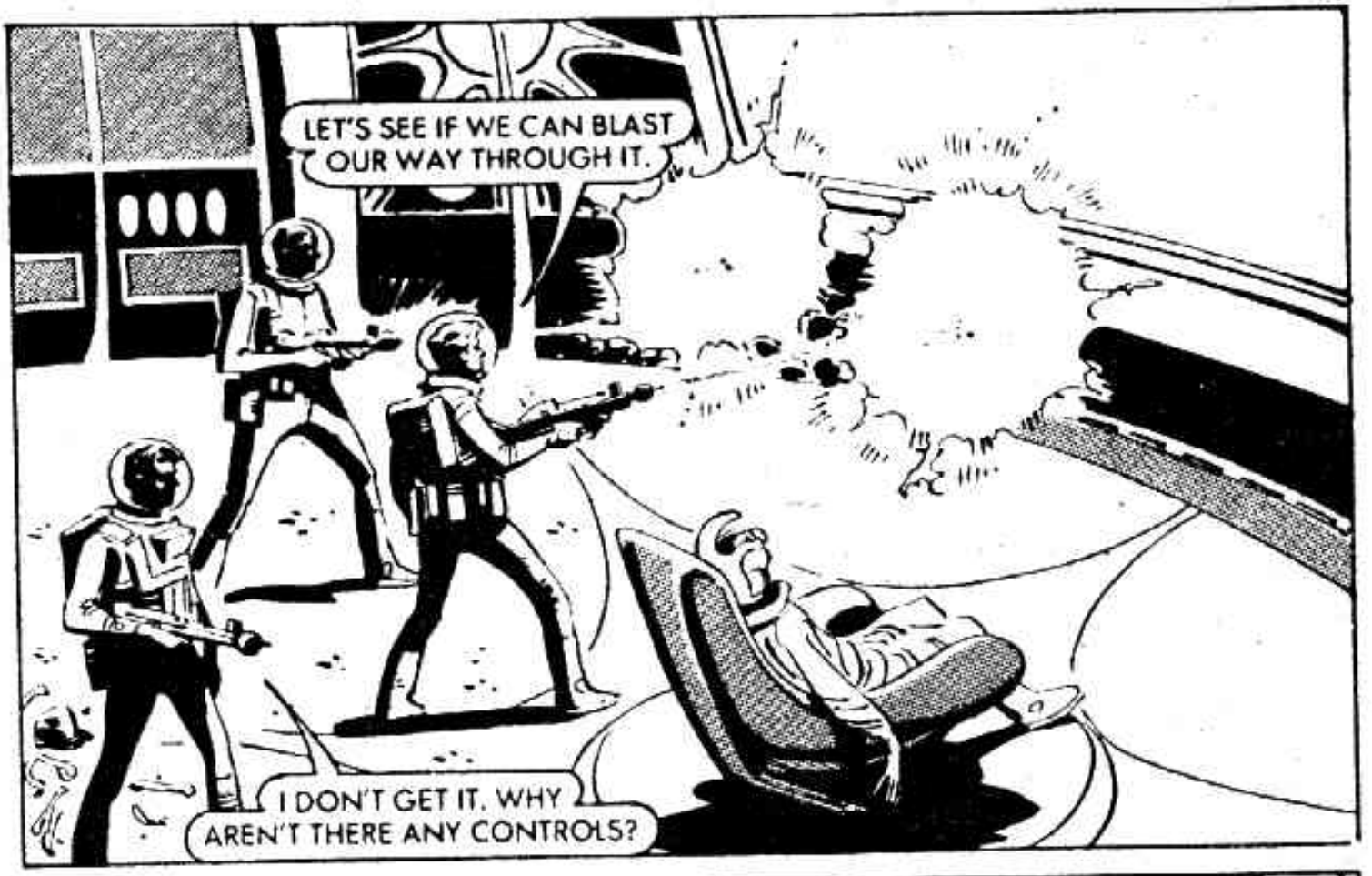

HELL'S FANGS! THEY'VE GOT AN ENERGY SHIELD! WE CAN'T HIT THEM!
TICK GRENADES MIGHT WORK.
TICK GRENADES WERE AUTOMATED EXPLOSIVES.
THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH!

AS THE ROBOTS PASSED BY, THE TICKS LEAPT FOR THEIR LEGS TO CLING UNNOTICED.
HURRY IT UP! TIME'S RUNNING OUT!
OK, TICKS! DETONATE!


THEY RACED ON THROUGH THE SILENT SHIP UNTIL AT LAST STEEL'S TRACKING COMPASS LED THEM TO THEIR GOAL —
IT'S BEHIND THIS DOOR. THERE'S PROBABLY SOMETHING ELSE BEHIND IT AS WELL!
Zap
SO OPEN IT CAREFULLY AND BE READY FOR ANYTHING!
IT'S OPENING, SIR!

LOOK OUT! SOMEONE'S IN THERE!
SHOOT! DON'T SHOUT!
THEY FIRED AND THE FIGURES DISINTEGRATED.
THEY'RE SKELETONS.
HOLD IT! THEY AREN'T GOING TO FIGHT ANYONE!

THEY'VE BEEN DEAD FOR YEARS! THIS MUST HAVE BEEN A FLAGSHIP OF SORTS AND THIS THE CONTROL ROOM.
MORE ROBOTS COMING, SIR!
IT'S STRANGE THERE AREN'T ANY CONTROLS IN THIS PLACE.
I BET THIS IS THE COMPUTER CORE!
AS THE PHASON RIFLE IN TASKER'S HAND TURNED TO MOLTEN METAL —
THE THING'S PROTECTED.


LET'S SEE IF WE CAN BLAST OUR WAY THROUGH IT.
I DON'T GET IT. WHY AREN'T THERE ANY CONTROLS?

MAJOR! WE'VE GOT ABOUT THREE MINUTES LEFT BEFORE THE RADIATION BECOMES CRITICAL. YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING OR WE'RE DEAD MEN!

DEAD MEN! THAT'S GOT TO BE THE ANSWER! THEY CONTROLLED THIS SHIP AND COMPUTER BY THOUGHT TRANSFER. AND THAT HELMET'S THE TRANSMITTER.
YOU DON'T KNOW THEIR LANGUAGE, SIR.
I DON'T NEED TO. THOUGHTS AREN'T WORDS — THEY'RE IMAGES, PICTURES — SO THIS THING SHOULD WORK FOR ME!

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MORE ROBOT ATTACKERS HAVE BROKEN THROUGH.
YOU'RE TOO LATE, MAJOR.
WHO SAYS SO?
THE THOUGHT HELMET WORKS! THE ROBOTS HAVE SHUT DOWN. STOP THE CRAFT FIRING ON OUR SHIP.

USING THE HELMET, STEEL ORDERED THE ROBOTS TO EJECT. ONCE THE MEGAKILLER CRAFT WAS EMPTY, IT WAS ADAPTED FOR MANUAL RUNNING AND A COURSE SET FOR EARTH.
WITH THE SECRET OF WARP-DRIVE WE DON'T NEED THE TURRII ANYMORE. WE MIGHT EVEN GO AND TEACH THEM A FEW LESSONS.

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